FINAL

SUBSEQUENT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
FOR
FOCUSED GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

and

Related Amendments to the Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance

and

Zone Change ZN05-0008

The Environmental Report Review Committee recommends that the decision-making body of the proposed project find that this document has been completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act.

Signed: (Nancy Settle) _____ June 22, 2005

ERRC Chair Date

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This document reflects all changes to the draft SEIR as recommended by the Environmental Report Review Committee on June 22, 2005 and approved by the Board of Supervisors on November 15, 2005, including all errata. These changes are depicted in legislative format with deleted text in ~~strike out~~ and add text underlined.

1. Introduction

1.1 Project Background/History

In 1988, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors approved a comprehensive update to the County General Plan. As part of that action, the Board certified a program-level EIR, incorporated feasible mitigation measures as policies of the General Plan, and adopted a Statement of Overriding Considerations acknowledging that significant, unmitigated impacts could occur. Since 1988, the Board of Supervisors adopted several amendments to the General Plan, each of which had its own environmental documentation (e.g., exemption from CEQA, EIR addendum, Supplemental EIR) and CEQA findings.

Board Direction

In 2000, the Board of Supervisors directed County staff to prepare a focused update to the County General Plan and to prepare a Subsequent EIR to update the environmental analysis. The primary scope of the Board-directed update is to:

- Extend the time horizon of the General Plan from 2010 to 2020,
- Update the population, dwelling unit and employment forecasts,
- Update the Transportation/Circulation chapter based on updated traffic forecasts,
- Update the Noise Chapter based on the updated traffic forecasts,
- Update selected chapters of the Public Facilities and Services Appendix based on the updated population, dwelling unit and employment forecasts, and
- Incorporate other specific amendments as directed by the Board of Supervisors.

The scope of the focused General Plan Update (GPU) project is described in greater detail in Section ~~3~~ 2.0, Project Description.

Chronology

The following actions regarding the GPU project have occurred to date:

- March of 2000, after considering several options, the Board directed staff to update the population, dwelling unit and employment forecasts to the year 2020 and update the Noise, Transportation and Circulation, and other necessary public facilities and services chapters of the General Plan, with most of the cost being funded through County Traffic Impact Mitigation Fees.
- April 2000 to June 2001 Planning Division staff was delayed in starting the GPU project due to the Coastal Commission's recommended changes to the County's update of the Local Coastal Program and Housing and Community Development's recommended changes to the County's update of the Housing Element.
- June 2001 to December 2001 Planning Division and PWA staff drafted amendments to the *Goals, Policies and Programs*, *Land Use Appendix*, Noise chapter of the *Hazards Appendix*, and Transportation/Circulation, Water Supply, Waste Treatment and Disposal Facilities and Fire Protection chapters of the *Public Facilities and Services Appendix*.
- January 2002 at the recommendation of the League of Women Voters and Supervisor Schillo, the Board directed staff to conduct a public study session for the Board on the GPU project prior to public release of the draft GPU amendments and Notice of Preparation for the Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The Board also directed that this study session be held in conjunction with the Planning Commission.

- March 2002 to November 2002 the Board and Planning Commission held a series of public hearings regarding the scope and process of the GPU project. The Board directed staff to proceed with the focused GPU, incorporating several recommendations of individual Board members.
- January 2003 PWA delayed release of the GPU and Notice of Preparation so that an independent traffic consultant could confirm the traffic modeling assumptions and evaluate several road-widening alternatives.
- December 2003, Planning Division resumed processing of the GPU based on new information provided by the PWA.
- February 2004, the Notice of Preparation of SEIR and project description is released for public review and comment.
- March 2004, a half-day public workshop is held at the County Government Center regarding the proposed GPU and SEIR.
- October 2004, the Draft SEIR is released for public review and comment.

1.2 Purpose/Legal Authority

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), sections 21000 et sec of the Public Resources Code, requires any "project" approved by a State or local agency to be reviewed for its impact on the physical environment. "Project" is defined any direct or indirect action that could result in a physical change to the environment, and includes amendments to a local General Plan. As required by CEQA, the State Office of Administrative Law has adopted guidelines to be used in the proper application of CEQA's environmental review requirements. The current State CEQA Guidelines are found in Title 14, Chapter 3 of the California Code of Regulations. Furthermore, the Board of Supervisors has adopted the County Administrative Supplement to CEQA, which specifies the specific procedures the County uses in complying with CEQA and CEQA Guidelines.

The Final EIR for the 1988 General Plan update (State Clearinghouse No. 87100711) was certified on May 24, 1988 by the Ventura County Board of Supervisors. According to section 15162 of the CEQA Guidelines, a Lead Agency must prepare a Subsequent EIR if:

1. Substantial changes are proposed in the project that will require major revisions of the previous EIR due to new significant environmental effects or substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects;
2. Substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken that require major revisions of the previous EIR due to new significant environmental effects or substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects; or
3. New information of substantial importance, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of a reasonable degree of diligence at the time the previous EIR was certified as complete, shows:
    - One or more new significant effects;
    - Significant effects previously examined will be substantially more severe;
    - Mitigation measures or alternatives previously found to be infeasible are now found to be feasible, but the project applicant declines to adopt them; or
    - New mitigation measures or alternatives are found to substantially lessen one or more significant effects, but the project applicant declines to adopt them.

Since the previous EIR is now over 16 years old, the population/dwelling unit/employment forecasts are being extended to the year 2020, and new environmental issues need to be evaluated, the County has elected to prepare a Subsequent EIR.

1.3 Lead, Responsible and Trustee Agencies

Under CEQA, the Lead Agency is the public agency that has the principal authority for approving or carrying out the project. Therefore, the County ~~or~~ of Ventura is the Lead Agency for the subject "project."

A Responsible Agency means a public agency within the State of California, other than the Lead Agency, that has discretionary approval authority over a project, or portion thereof. Since there are no other public agencies that must approve this project, or any portion thereof, there are no Responsible Agencies.

Trustee Agency means a state agency having jurisdiction by law over natural resources affected by a project, which are held in trust for the people of the State of California. The California Department of Fish and Game is a Trustee Agency for the subject project with regard to fish and wildlife, designated rare or endangered native plants, and to game refuges, and ecological reserves.

1.4 Scope of EIR

As stated above, the subject Subsequent EIR is an update to the program EIR that was certified for the comprehensive General Plan update approved in 1988. Since an Initial Study was not prepared, this SEIR covers all environmental issues listed in the County's Initial Study Checklist (Appendix D of the *Ventura County Administrative Supplement to CEQA*). To reduce redundancy within this SEIR, the environmental issues have been organized into the following sections:

1. Air Quality
2. Mineral Resources
3. Biological Resources
4. Farmland Resources
5. Visual Resources
6. Paleontological Resources
7. Cultural Resources
8. Coastal Beaches and Sand Dunes
9. Seismic/Geologic Hazards
10. Hydraulic Hazards/Flood Control and Drainage
11. Fire Hazards/Fire Protection Services
12. Hazardous Materials and Waste/Public Health
13. Noise and Vibration
14. Transportation/Circulation
15. Airports and Aviation Hazards
16. Water Supply/Resources
17. Waste Treatment and Disposal
18. Utilities/Energy Resources
19. Law Enforcement and Emergency Services
20. Education
21. Recreation
22. Community Character
23. Housing/Employment
24. Growth Inducement

1.5 Areas of Known Controversy

The County of Ventura received 13 letters in response to the Notice of Preparation of a Subsequent EIR for this focused General Plan Update (see EIR Appendix 8.1). Within those letters, the following issues were raised regarding potential significant adverse impacts and mitigation measures:

- The 2000 Census and more recent population and dwelling unit estimates of some cities shows that the some of the current VCOG forecasts for the years 2005, 2010 and 2015 have already been exceeded.
- Caltrans prefers to see a 30 year growth projection, rather than the 20 year growth projection contained within the proposed focused GPU.

- Caltrans suggests that the County Traffic Impact Mitigation Fee Ordinance be amended to increase fees on development to include the "local funding match" for future Caltrans improvements to the State highways within Ventura County.
- Improving the Regional Road Network can increase auto and truck traffic in an area, particularly the Somis, Moorpark and Santa Rosa Valley areas.
- Improving the Regional Road Network can be growth-inducing, particularly the Las Posas Valley and Ojai Valley.
- Improving the Regional Road Network can increase impacts on air quality, agricultural land, noise, wetlands and other biological resources.
- Widening and improving the intersection of Highways 34 and 118 would have a significant impact on the community of Somis.
- The Casitas Municipal Water District has a moratorium on issuing water "will serve" letters due to inadequate water supply.
- Allowing community sewage systems, and uses that require those systems, outside of established urban areas could be growth inducing.
- Allowing the creation of sub-standard sized Agricultural parcels could result in significant development of Farmworker Housing Complexes.
- A greenbelt agreement and/or Area Plan should be prepared and adopted for the Las Posas Valley in order to mitigate environmental impacts from growth.

2. Project Description

2.1 Project Applicant

County of Ventura
c/o Planning Division-Resource Management Agency
County Government Center, Hall of Administration
800 South Victoria Avenue, #1740
Ventura, CA 93009

2.2 Project Location

The County General Plan encompasses the entire County of Ventura. Although the legal authority of the County ~~g~~General ~~p~~Plan to govern land use covers only the unincorporated area, the plan includes applicable information regarding the incorporated cities within the county as well.

2.3 Project Objectives

The project is a focused update to the County ~~g~~General ~~p~~Plan to fulfill the following objectives:

- Change the planning time horizon of the General Plan from 2010 to 2020.
- Integrate 2020 population, dwelling unit and employment forecasts into the Land Use and Public Facilities & Services Appendices of the General Plan, as necessary.
- Update and integrate 2020 traffic modeling into the Transportation and Circulation chapter of the Public Facilities & Services Appendix.
- Update traffic-related noise contours of the Noise chapter of the Hazards Appendix, and amend the Noise policies and programs to address construction noise standards and mitigation.
- Re-examine and, where appropriate, modify the existing public facilities/services and noise goals, policies and programs in light of new information and changing priorities.
- Incorporate other specific amendments as directed by the Board of Supervisors (see sSection 2.4 below).
- Update appropriate sections of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the countywide General Plan

2.4 Project Characteristics

There are seven required "elements" of a general plan (land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open-space, noise, and safety). A general plan may be adopted in any format deemed appropriate or convenient by the local legislative body and may consist of a single document or a group of documents relating to subjects or geographical segments of the planning area. Ventura County has adopted a general plan consisting of:

- *Goals, Policies and Programs* document governing the unincorporated area of the county,
- Four Appendices (*Resources*, *Hazards*, *Land Use*, and *Public Facilities and Services*) providing background information in support of the General Plan goals, policies and programs, and
- Ten Area Plans governing specific geographical areas of the unincorporated county (*Ahmanson Ranch, Coastal, El Rio/Del Norte, Lake Sherwood/Hidden Valley, North Ventura Avenue, Oak Park, Ojai Valley, Piru, Saticoy,* and *Thousand Oaks*).

This general plan update specifically includes the following amendments:

Land Use Appendix

Update the residential and employment holding capacity tables and population, dwelling unit, population per dwelling unit and employment forecast tables to the year 2020 using the most recent forecasts approved by the Ventura Council of Governments (VCOG). The Board of Supervisors has further directed staff to modify the population, dwelling unit and employment forecast tables to reflect that Ahmanson Ranch will not be developed because it was recently purchased by the State of California in order to preserve the property as open space.

Public Facilities and Services Appendix

Update the Transportation and Circulation, Water Supply Facilities, Waste Treatment and Disposal Facilities, Fire Protection, and Educational and Library Facilities and Services chapters.

Hazards Appendix

Update the Noise chapter utilizing, in part, the updated traffic forecasts.

Goals, Policies and Programs

Incorporate the following procedural and substantive policy and program amendments:

Land Use Chapter:

- Update the population, dwelling unit and employment forecast tables to reflect the 2020 time horizon, and the purchase of Ahmanson Ranch by the State.
- Increase the minimum parcel size requirements of the Open Space land use designation from 10-acres to 20-acres.
- Amend the Minimum Parcel Size policy to allow creation of substandard sized parcels for Farmworker Housing Complexes within or adjacent to a city Sphere of Influence or adjacent to an unincorporated area designated “Urban” or “Existing Community” on the General Land Use Map.
- Amend the building coverage standards to eliminate inconsistencies and provide clarification, and allow deviations for agricultural-related uses (e.g., agricultural packing plants, farmworker housing complexes) in the Open Space and Agricultural designations, subject to a discretionary permit.
- Amend the policy regarding project consistency with the *Guidelines for Orderly Development* to allow community sewage treatment facilities, and uses that require said facilities, in Rural, Open Space and Agricultural designated areas on a case-be case basis in order to protect groundwater quality.
- Add the Lewis Road Existing Community map and table to reflect RPD (Residential Planned Development) zoning at the County’s Lewis Road property (formerly owned by the State of California) and change the land use designation of other formerly State-owned property near CSUCI from “State and Federal Facility” to “Agricultural.”

Public Facilities and Services Chapter:

- Amend the Public Facilities Map to remove Bradley Road extension south of Hwy 118, Cliff Avenue, Etting Road, Grand Avenue, Pasadena Avenue Sycamore Road, and Wood Road from the County Regional Road Network; add Bardsdale Avenue, Borchard Road, Calle Yucca, Cawelti Road, El Roblar Drive, Laguna Road east of Las Posas Road, and Teal Club Road to the County Regional Road Network; and re-classify Rice Ave (Pleasant Valley Road to Hwy 34) from “Freeway/Expressway” to “Highway/Thoroughfare.”

- Amend the Transportation and Circulation policies and Public Facilities Map to eliminate the Reserved Right-Of-Way designation.
- Amend the Public Facilities Map to reflect the widening of roads of the Regional Road Network within the unincorporated area of the County that are necessary to accommodate the projected traffic flows for the year 2020 at the prescribed LOS standards of the General Plan. Specifically, the following roads in the unincorporated area would have to be widened or the current General Plan modified as follows:

Road (Segment)	Current # Lanes	Existing Plan # Lanes (2010)	Proposed Plan # Lanes (2020)
State/Federal Routes:			
Hwy 23 Thousand Oaks city limits to Moorpark city limits	4	4	6
Hwy 33 Casitas Bypass (Casitas Vista Rd to Arnez Grade)	0-2	4	4
Hwy 34 (Oxnard to Camarillo city limits)*	2	2	4
Hwy 34 (Camarillo city limits to Hwy 118)*	2	2	4
Hwy 101 (Santa Barbara County line to Mussel Shoals)	4	6	6
Hwy 101 (Ventura city limits to Oxnard city limits)	6	8	10
Hwy 101 (Oxnard city limits to Camarillo city limits)*	6	10	10
Hwy 118 (Hwy 232 to Santa Clara Ave)*	2	4	4
Hwy 118 (Santa Clara Ave~~.~~ to Hwy 34)*	2	2	4
Hwy 118 (Hwy 34 to Moorpark city limits)	2	4	4
County Roads:			
Borchard Rd (Wendy Dr east to Thousand Oaks city limits)*	2	-	4
Cawelti Rd (Las Posas Rd to Lewis Rd)*	2	-	4
Central Ave (Santa Clara Ave to Camarillo city limits)*	2	4	4
Channel Islands Blvd (Oxnard city limits to Rice Ave)*	2	2	4
Harbor Blvd (Oxnard city limits to Ventura city limits)*	2	4	4
Hueneme Rd (Oxnard city limits to Rice Ave)*	2	4	4
Hueneme Rd (Rice Ave to Las Posas Rd)*	2	2	4
Las Posas Rd (Hueneme Rd to Camarillo city limits)*	2	2	4
Lewis Rd (CSUCI entrance to Pleasant Valley Road)	2	4	4
Moorpark Rd (Santa Rosa Rd to Moorpark city limits)*	2	2	4
Olivas Park Drive (Harbor Blvd to Seaborg Ave)*	2	2	4
Pleasant Valley Rd (Rice Ave to Las Posas Rd)	2	4	4
Rice Ave (Hueneme Rd to Oxnard city limits)*	0	2	4
Rice Ave (Pleasant Valley Rd to Hwy 34)	4	6	4
Rose Ave (Hueneme Rd to Oxnard city limits)*	0	2	4
Santa Clara Ave (Oxnard city limits to Hwy 118)*	2	4	4
Santa Rosa Rd (Camarillo city limits to Moorpark Rd)*	2	4	4
Victoria Ave (Oxnard city limits to Gonzales Rd)*	4	4	6
Victoria Ave (Gonzales Rd to Ventura city limits)	4	6	6
Wendy Dr (Borchard Rd north to Thousand Oaks city limits)*	2	4	4

- Amend the Transportation and Circulation policies to allow the approval of agriculturally-related permits (e.g., packing houses, farmworker housing complexes), affordable housing projects (projects that qualify for a density bonus or are otherwise sold/rented to Lower-income households), and additional dwellings on Cultural Heritage Sites, even though the roads that would be serving the project are, or would be, operating at a Level of Service (LOS) lower than that prescribed by the General Plan.

Hazards Chapter:

- Amend the noise policies to reflect changes to the Regional Road Network and traffic noise contours based on the 2020 traffic model.
- Amend noise policies to establish construction-noise threshold criteria and mitigation (Construction Noise Threshold Criteria and Control Plan).
- Amend noise programs to integrate the Construction Noise Threshold Criteria and Control Plan into ministerial building and grading permits.

Area Plans

- To ensure consistency with the countywide *Goals, Policies and Programs*, the Agricultural and/or Open Space building coverage standards of several Area Plans (*El Rio/Del Norte*, *Lake Sherwood/Hidden Valley*, *Oak Park*, *Ojai Valley*, *Piru*, and *Thousand Oaks*) are being amended.

County Zoning Ordinance

In addition to amending the County General Plan, amendments are also necessary to the County Zoning Ordinance. The specific proposed changes are as follows:

- Amend the *Non-coastal Zoning Ordinance* to allow the creation of substandard sized parcels for Farmworker Housing Complexes within the A-E (Agricultural Exclusive) and O-S (Open Space) zones consistent with the General Plan policy change (see Land Use policy changes above).
- Change the zoning of the land within the proposed Lewis Road Existing Community (see Land Use policy changes above) from "O-S-160Ac" (Open Space, 160 acres minimum) to "R-P-D" (Residential Planned Development), and other formerly State-owned property from "O-S" to "A-E" (Agricultural Exclusive).

The specific amendments of this focused General Plan Update project can be viewed at:

http://www.ventura.org/planning/programs_services/gen_plan_update/focus_gen_plan_update.htm

2.5 Project Components That Have Potential for Adverse Environmental Impact

The components of the proposed General Plan and Zoning Ordinance amendments that have the potential for adversely impacting the environment include the following:

- The 1988 General Plan EIR utilized the 2010 General Plan population, dwelling unit and employment forecasts to evaluate project and cumulative impacts. Increasing the time horizon of the General Plan increases the potential number of dwelling units and number of people who are anticipated to be residing and/or working in the unincorporated area of the County and the County as a whole. The increase in the number of dwelling units, population and employment for the unincorporated area is considered a "project impact" and the increase for the County as a whole is considered a "cumulative impact."
- Allowing for the creation of substandard sized parcels for Farmworker Housing Complexes in the Agricultural and Open Space designations and the A-E and O-S zones could have impacts, but since the specific locations of future project applications are not specifically known, only the growth inducing impacts of this component can be qualitatively assessed at this time.
- Allowing for the increase in building coverage for agricultural-related uses in the Open Space and Agricultural designations could have impacts, but since the specific locations of future

project applications are not known, only the growth inducing impacts can be qualitatively assessed at this time.

- Allowing community sewage treatment facilities, and uses that require said facilities, in Rural, Open Space and Agricultural designated areas in order to protect groundwater quality could have impacts, but since the specific locations of future project applications are not known, only the growth inducing impacts can be qualitatively assessed at this time.
- Creating the Lewis Road Existing Community designation and rezoning the area to R-P-D (Residential Planned Development, 30 dwelling units maximum) would allow for a potential increase in the number of residents in that area. However, much of the increase is already allowed under existing permits, which have been previously analyzed for environmental impacts. Since the County Board of Supervisors has not yet finalized its plans for the Lewis Road property and the specific future projects are not known, only the growth inducing impacts can be qualitatively assessed at this time.
- The planned widening of roads of the Regional Road Network will have both direct impacts and growth inducing impacts on the environment.
- Allowing the approval of agriculturally-related permits, affordable housing projects, and additional dwellings on Cultural Heritage Sites, even though the roads that would be serving the project are, or would be, operating at a Level of Service (LOS) lower than that prescribed by the General Plan would have significant traffic impacts and would also have growth inducing impacts.
- Allowing limited-term construction noise to exceed the current General Plan noise standards is regarded as a potentially significant adverse impact.

3. Summary of Impacts and Alternatives

The following sections summarize the impacts, mitigation measures and alternatives as discussed in detail in chapters 4 and 5:

3.1 Unmitigated, Significant Adverse Impacts

The following environmental issues were found to have one or more significant adverse impacts, which may not be mitigated to a less-than-significant level:

ISSUE - Impact	Mitigation (Responsibility)	Feasibility/Residual Impacts
4.1 – AIR QUALITY Development in the unincorporated areas and countywide under existing land use plans will have a significant, adverse impact on air quality since the forecasted development exceeds the AQMP's 2005 population forecast.	• The Ventura County AQMP contains Area and Stationary Source Control Measures, Mobile Source Control Measures, and Transportation Control Measures (TCM), which collectively show attainment of Federal standards by 2005. (APCD) • County General Plan policies require discretionary development to mitigate potential air quality impacts. (County Planning)	• Feasible, but ambient ozone concentrations will continue to exceed State standards in the short-term. • County General Plan policies do not apply to ministerial development.
4.3 – BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES • Potential direct impact on biological resources caused by Regional Road Network road widening and re-alignment. • Proposed exceptions to land use and traffic policies have the potential for direct and indirect impacts on biological resources. • Development will incrementally and cumulatively impact biological resources (existing land use plans).	• Existing General Plan policies require discretionary development to be reviewed for biological impacts, to include feasible mitigation, and, if necessary, adopt overriding considerations. (County) • No overriding considerations are allowed for significant wetland impacts outside of urban areas, therefore, some road widening projects may be required to provide offsite wetland replacement/ restoration. (County) • Include a new policy requiring roads and flood control projects to mitigate impacts to wildlife corridors, where feasible. (County PWA and WPD) • Develop and implement a biological resource overlay zone for critical areas, making ministerial development discretionary. (County Planning)	• Direct impacts of discretionary development could still occur with overriding considerations. • Indirect population impacts of unincorporated and cumulative development are still potentially significant. • Feasibility of offsite wetland replacement/restoration is unknown at this time. • Wildlife corridor mitigation for public facilities is feasible and would reduce impacts, but may not be reduced to a less-than-significant level. • Feasibility of biological resource overlay zone is unknown at this time.

ISSUE - Impact	Mitigation (Responsibility)	Feasibility/Residual Impacts
4.4 – AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES • Loss of ~~178~~ 127.20 acres of important farmland from Regional Road Network road widening. • Loss of undetermined amount of important farmland from exceptions to building coverage for agricultural-related uses, creation of substandard sized parcels for farmworker housing complexes, and community sewage treatment facilities in agricultural areas. • Loss of ~~217~~ 689acres of important farmland due to unincorporated urban and rural development (existing land use plans). • Cumulative loss of ~~2,735~~ 4,335 acres of important farmland due to city and county development. • Project and cumulative development can decrease agricultural water quality & quantity, increase dust, reduce solar access, eliminate windbreaks, decrease beneficial organisms or natural or man-made protection against harmful biological organisms, increase incompatible land uses in proximity to agricultural land resulting in increased vandalism, pilferage, trespass or impact from chemical spraying.	• Existing AE zoning and LCA Contracts, plus existing General Plan policy to condition discretionary development to remove as little important agricultural land as possible. (County Planning and Agricultural Commissioner) • Existing Greenbelt Agreements and SOAR Ordinance prevent conversion to other land use designations. (County Board & Electorate) • Add policy to require GPAs and Zone Changes to financially compensate for the loss of agricultural soils. (County Board) • County Right-to-Farm Ordinance and General Plan policy to prevent conflicts with adjacent agricultural land. (County Agricultural Commissioner) • Other existing General Plan policies require discretionary development to address impacts on agricultural water, dust, solar, windbreaks, and pests & diseases. (County Agricultural Commissioner)	• Ministerial development in proximity to agricultural land could have significant impacts. • Discretionary development on or in proximity to agricultural land could have significant impacts and still be approved with overriding considerations. • The political or economic feasibility of a policy for monetary compensation to purchase agricultural easements to mitigate for loss of agricultural soils is unknown. Even if it is determined to be feasible, it would not reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level.

ISSUE - Impact	Mitigation (Responsibility)	Feasibility/Residual Impacts
4.5 - SCENIC RESOURCES • Widening of Regional Road Network would impact "eligible" County scenic highways. • Development could impact "eligible" scenic highways and unprotected scenic views and vistas.	• Scenic Highway Protection (SHP) overlay zone could be applied to "eligible" scenic highways. (County Planning) • Scenic Resources Protection (SRP) overlay zone could be applied to scenic features to protect views and vistas. (County Planning) • Existing General Plan policies require discretionary development to review visual impacts, incorporate feasible mitigation measures and, if necessary, adopt overriding considerations.	• SHP and SRP overlay zoning program is financially infeasible at this time. • Existing General Plan policies are feasible, but overriding considerations are allowed.
4.6 – PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES Development allowed by existing plans can have direct and indirect impacts on paleontological resources.	Existing General Plan policies require discretionary development assessment and mitigation to less than significant level or extraction of recoverable data. (County)	Direct impacts of discretionary development would be mitigated to a less-than-significant level, but direct impact of ministerial development and indirect impacts of development would still be significant.
4.7 – CULTURAL RESOURCES Development allowed by existing plans can have direct and indirect impacts on cultural resources.	Existing General Plan policies require discretionary development assessment and mitigation to less than significant level or extraction of recoverable data. (County)	Direct impacts of discretionary development would be mitigated to a less-than-significant level, but direct impact of ministerial development and indirect impacts of development would still be significant.
4.8 – COASTAL BEACHES AND SAND DUNES Individual and cumulative development throughout the County could have impacts on the beaches and dune formation.	Existing General Plan policies mitigate direct impacts of development to less than significant level. (County)	Impact of cumulative development on sediment transport to beach area is potentially significant and cannot be feasibly mitigated to a less-than-significant level.
4.11 - FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES Cumulative development will increase the need for additional equipment and facilities.	County ordinance to offset cost of increased fire protection facilities and equipment from development should be expanded to include the entire County. (County Board of Supervisors)	Political feasibility is unknown; cumulative development located outside of the Southeast portion of the county will significantly impact the need for additional personnel, equipment and facilities.

ISSUE - Impact	Mitigation (Responsibility)	Feasibility/Residual Impacts
4.12 - HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AND WASTE/PUBLIC HEALTH Discretionary and ministerial development will generate hazardous materials and waste, and public health could be potentially impacted.	• Existing General Plan policies require discretionary development to be reviewed and conditioned to avoid or mitigate impacts from hazardous materials and waste. (County Environmental Health, FPD) • Implementation of the County Hazardous Waste Management Plan, Hazardous Materials Program, and Leaking Underground Fuel Tank (LUFT) Program reduces the amount of hazardous waste and facilitates the construction and operation of local facilities to recycle and dispose of hazardous wastes.	Although many measures are being taken to reduce cumulative household hazardous waste from ministerial residential development, the impact still remains potentially significant.
4.13 - NOISE AND VIBRATION • Discretionary and ministerial development could generate, or be impacted by, significant noise levels. • Road widening could significantly impact existing noise-sensitive land uses. • Changes to the General Plan policies regarding construction noise would allow significant short-term noise impacts without requiring project-by-project EIRs and overriding considerations. • Blasting during construction could pose a significant short-term vibration impact.	• Existing General Plan policies would mitigate potential noise and vibration impacts to or from discretionary development. (County) • Road widening projects could incorporate construction of noise barriers. (County PWA) • Standard construction noise mitigation measures could be adopted in lieu of General Plan policies. (County PWA and Building & Safety) • Ventura Building Code regulates blasting during construction, plus Board directed that there be increased notification and inspections. (County PWA)	• General Plan policies are feasible, but do not address ministerial development. • Feasibility of noise barriers in conjunction with road widening projects is not known at this time. • Standard construction noise standards are feasible, but would not reduce short-term noise impacts to a less-than-significant level. • Blasting regulations are feasible, and reduce the impact to a less-than significant level.

ISSUE - Impact	Mitigation (Responsibility)	Feasibility/Residual Impacts
4.14 – TRANSPORTATION/ CIRCULATION – Traffic Level of Service (LOS) Cumulative development will cause LOS on several roads of the Regional Road Network to fall below LOS "D"	• Increase number of travel lanes and/or make other improvements to roadways. (Caltrans & VCTC are responsible for State & Federal highways; County PWA is responsible for County roads) • Prohibit unincorporated discretionary development unless roads are adequate or there is a full funding commitment to make road improvements within a reasonable period of time. (County PWA)	• Financial feasibility of all improvements to State and Federal highways is unknown. • County Traffic Impact Mitigation Fee program requires the participation of all cities to ensure full funding. Political feasibility unknown. • County traffic policies prohibiting discretionary development are feasible; however, proposed exceptions to those policies would add traffic to roads that are below acceptable LOS, which is significant.
4.14 - TRANSPORTATION/ CIRCULATION – Safety/Design of Public and Private Roads Individual and cumulative development could have a significant impact in areas currently served by substandard roads.	• Discretionary development can be conditioned per General Plan policies to make or proportionally fund off-site improvements, or denied if access is inadequate. (County PWA & FPD) • Preparation of plans and construct street improvements with funding approved by existing property owners. (County PWA, FPD & property owners).	• General Plan policies don't apply to ministerial development. • Improvements may be physically infeasible in some communities. • Existing property owners are generally reluctant to tax themselves for improvements; the mitigation may be financially infeasible.
4.14 - TRANSPORTATION/ CIRCULATION – Pedestrian & Bicycle Access Individual and cumulative development in older communities could have significant impacts on pedestrian and bicycle access.	A policy could be added to require that, as Area Plans are updated, a community-wide pedestrian and bicycle access master plan be prepared and funding mechanisms explored. (County Planning & PWA)	Policy would not cover many of the existing communities and may prove to be physically or financially infeasible.
4.15 – AIRPORTS AND AIRPORT HAZARDS Discretionary development under the County's Agricultural designation and development within cities could adversely impact the operation of the airports.	• Existing County General Plan policies would mitigate or avoid airport safety and noise impacts. (County) • Discretionary development within cities would be reviewed for consistency with the Airport Comprehensive Plan. (cities, VCTC)	• County policies are feasible and reduce the impact to less-than-significant level. • City development could be significant if cities approve incompatible projects.

ISSUE - Impact	Mitigation (Responsibility)	Feasibility/Residual Impacts
4.16 – WATER RESOURCES AND SUPPLY Individual and cumulative development has the potential to significantly impact ground and surface water quantity and/or quality, and adversely impact water supplies.	Existing General Plan programs and policies mitigate the potential impacts of discretionary development in the unincorporated area of the County. (GMA, County PWA, Environmental Health)	Feasible, but cumulative ministerial development and development within cities has the potential for significant, unmitigated impacts.
4.18 - UTILITIES/ENERGY RESOURCES Improvements to electrical, gas and communication facilities may have visual impacts on County scenic resources.	Existing General Plan policies mitigate visual impacts of discretionary improvements to utility facilities. (County Planning)	Improvements to utility facilities that are not subject to County regulations are the sole responsibility of the PUC, which could approve projects with significant visual impacts with overriding considerations.
4.20 – EDUCATION FACILITIES - Libraries Residential development in the unincorporated area and the cities will increase the demand for library services.	Given the financial constraints of the County, financial participation by the cities in the Ventura County Library system would have to increase to keep pace with demand. (cities)	Feasibility is unknown and <u>impact</u> remains significant.
4.21 - RECREATION FACILITIES • Residential development in the unincorporated area and the cities will increase the demand for park and recreation facilities and services. • Residential development in the unincorporated area could obstruct access to existing recreational facilities (e.g., trails).	• Existing General Plan policies require payment of Quimby fees for local parkland acquisition. (County GSA) • Existing General Plan policies require discretionary development to avoid obstructing access to existing recreation facilities, if feasible. (County Planning and GSA) • Existing General Plan programs, if implemented, could increase developer fees to fully fund acquisition, development and maintenance of regional and local recreation facilities. (County GSA)	• Quimby fees are currently insufficient to cover the cost of acquiring local park land; therefore the impact caused by increased demand for local parks remains significant. • Discretionary development that would obstruct access to existing recreational facilities could still be approved with overriding considerations if feasible mitigation measures for providing access are not available; therefore, obstruction of access may still occur. • Implementing increased developer fees to fully fund acquisition, development and maintenance of regional and local recreation facilities would fully mitigate the increased demand for new parks caused by new residents; however, GSA is not funded to implement these measures and the impact remains significant.

ISSUE - Impact	Mitigation (Responsibility)	Feasibility/Residual Impacts
4.22 – COMMUNITY CHARACTER • Development under the existing land use plans could adversely impact community character. • Regional Road Network road widening could significantly impact the communities of Casa Conejo, Casitas Springs, Nyeland Acres, ~~Somis, East~~ Santa Rosa Valley and Somis~~Casa Conejo~~.	• Existing General Plan policies would mitigate impact of discretionary development. (County Planning) • Modify road design and landscaping to be consistent with community character. (Caltrans, County PWA)	• Mitigating discretionary development is feasible and would reduce the impact to less-than-significant level; however, ministerial development would not be mitigated and remains potentially significant. • Modifying road design is feasible and mitigates impacts on Casa Conejo, Casitas Springs, Nyeland Acres, ~~East~~ and Santa Rosa Valley ~~and Casa Conejo~~, but does not mitigate the impacts on the community of Somis to a less-than-significant level. Nonetheless, because community character is subjective, it is recognized that some residents may disagree with this conclusion.
4.23 – HOUSING • Housing demolitions could adversely impact existing housing stock. • Employment generating land uses would increase demand for housing that could exceed supply in some cities and unincorporated communities.	• Existing General Plan housing preservation policies in the coastal zone would mitigate loss of affordable housing in that area. • Existing General Plan housing demand assessment policies could help in developing mitigation measures on a project or community basis.	• Preservation polices do not apply outside of coastal zone and could not be feasibly imposed on ministerial development. • Housing demand assessment policies may not result in feasible mitigation for every project or community and could still be approved with overriding considerations; therefore, the impact remains potentially significant.

ISSUE - Impact	Mitigation (Responsibility)	Feasibility/Residual Impacts
4.24 – GROWTH INDUCEMENT The following components (policy changes) of this focused General Plan update could have significant growth inducement impacts: • Allowing for the creation of substandard sized parcels for farmworker housing complexes in Agricultural and Open Space designations and the A-E and O-S zones. • Allowing for the increase in building coverage for crop and orchard-related uses and farmworker housing complexes in the Open Space and Agricultural designations. • Allowing community sewage treatment facilities and uses that require said facilities, in Rural, Open Space and Agricultural designated areas in order to protect groundwater quality. • The planned widening of roads of the Regional Road Network would remove an impediment to long-term growth. • Allowing the approval of affordable housing projects, additional dwellings on Cultural Heritage Sites, and agriculturally-related uses even though the roads that would be serving the project are, or would be, operating at a Level of Service (LOS) lower than that prescribed by the General Plan.	The following options could be considered by the Board to reduce the growth inducing effects: • Limit the number of farmworker housing complexes that may be constructed within/adjacent to an individual city Sphere of Influence or adjacent to an unincorporated area designated Urban or Existing Community. • Reduce the scope of the proposed building coverage exemption to existing crop or orchard related facilities, • Limit the scope of the building coverage exemption to parcels that are currently non-conforming as to the minimum parcel size of the land use designation. • Interpret policy 3.1.2-11 and the Guidelines for Orderly Development as not applying directly to community sewage treatment facilities, but only to development that would require new or significant expansion of such facilities (e.g., subdivision maps). • Lower LOS standard on selected roads of the Regional Road Network to “E” and not widen the road(s). (see Alternatives) • Impose limitations so that affordable housing projects, additional dwellings on Cultural Heritage Sites, and agriculturally-related uses do not unduly impact traffic in prescribed areas of the county.	• Board of Supervisors must weigh the public benefit of the policy change, and any changes to those policies, vs. the potential growth inducing impacts of each policy exception. • Lowering the LOS standard to “E” on one or~~e~~ more roads on the Regional Road Network would remove a current policy impediment to new discretionary development in those areas; therefore, this alternative would be growth inducing.

3.2 Mitigated, Significant Adverse Impacts

The following environmental issues were found to have one or more significant adverse impacts, which would be mitigated to a less-than-significant level with the imposition of existing and/or proposed policies of the County General Plan:

ISSUE - Impact	Mitigation (Responsibility)	Feasibility/Residual Impact
4.2 – MINERAL RESOURCES • Development could obstruct access to aggregate and petroleum resources. • Mineral extraction and processing can cause impacts involving noise, vibration, dust, scenic resources, heavy truck traffic, and loss of farmland and/or biological resources.	• General Plan policies involving the Mineral Resource Protection (MRP) Overlay Zone prohibit development of incompatible uses. (County Planning) • Mineral extraction requires a discretionary CUP, which are reviewed and conditioned on a case-by-case basis. (County)	• MRP overlay zone policies are feasible and reduce the impact to a less-than significant level. • For mining CUP mitigation measures and residual impacts, see sections 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.8, 4.13, 4.14 and 4.22.
4.9 – SEISMIC & GEOLOGIC HAZARDS Development can be significantly impacted by or impact faults, ground shaking, liquefaction, seiche, tsunami, landslides/ mudslides, expansive soils and subsidence.	• Existing General Plan policies mitigate the potential impacts for discretionary development. (County PWA) • Existing County Building Code mitigates the potential impacts from construction of structures and grading. (County Building & Safety and PWA) • Existing Agricultural Hillside Ordinance mitigates agricultural hillside grading (Farm/Ag Advisor)	Feasible; reduces impact to less-than-significant level.
4.10 - HYDRAULIC HAZARDS/ FLOOD CONTROL AND DRAINAGE Development can be significantly impacted by flooding or impact flood control facilities.	Existing General Plan policies, Subdivision Ordinance, Building Code, and regulations of the Ventura County Watershed Protection District mitigate the impact on or from discretionary and ministerial development.	Feasible; reduces impact to less-than-significant level.
4.11 - FIRE HAZARDS Development in high fire hazard areas and in remote locations can be significantly impacted by brush fires.	• Existing General Plan policies mitigate fire hazard of discretionary development. (County FPD) • Existing State and local ordinances mitigate fire hazard of ministerial development. (County FPD and Building & Safety) • Annual brush clearance and prescribed burning programs. (FPD)	Feasible; reduces impact to less-than-significant level.

ISSUE - Impact	Mitigation (Responsibility)	Feasibility/Residual Impact
4.14 - TRANSPORTATION/ CIRCULATION – Tactical Emergency Access Individual and cumulative development can have a significant impact in areas that are served by substandard roads.	• Discretionary development can be conditioned per General Plan policies to make off-site improvements, or deny the project. (County PWA & FPD) • Require that the individual structures have fire sprinklers. (County Fire Protection District)	Feasible; reduces impact to less-than-significant level.
4.14 - TRANSPORTATION/ CIRCULATION – Off-street Parking Development can have a significant impact in areas that are served by substandard roads if there is insufficient off-street parking during construction.	Discretionary development can be reviewed and conditioned for construction-related parking impacts. (County Planning) The towing of illegally parked vehicles during construction. (County PWA & FPD; property owner associations)	Feasible, but towing of illegally parked vehicles is limited to complaint response.
4.14 - TRANSPORTATION/ CIRCULATION – Bus Transit Project impacts on bus transit facilities and cumulative demand for bus service.	Existing General Plan policies mitigate impacts on bus transit facilities and services. (County PWA) Increase bus transit service. (VCTC; bus transit operators)	Feasible; reduces impact to less-than-significant level.
4.14 - TRANSPORTATION/ CIRCULATION – Railroads Individual and cumulative discretionary development along railroad rights of way could have significant impacts on railroad operations due to trespass and vandalism and railroad/street crossings.	Discretionary development adjacent to railroad rights-of-way can be conditioned to provide walls or fences that would inhibit trespass. (County Planning) Discretionary development taking access on roads that have uncontrolled railroad crossings can be conditioned to make safety improvements. (County PWA)	Feasible; reduces impact to less-than-significant level.
4.14 - TRANSPORTATION/ CIRCULATION – Pipelines Development has the potential to impact or be impacted by existing pipelines.	Ministerial development must avoid impacts to/from pipelines under the authority of the *California Building Code* and *County Building Code*. (County Building and Safety) Discretionary development is reviewed and conditioned to avoid impacts to/from pipelines. (County)	Feasible; reduces impact to less-than-significant level.

ISSUE - Impact	Mitigation (Responsibility)	Feasibility/Residual Impact
4.17 – WASTE TREATMENT AND DISPOSAL Individual and cumulative development has the potential to significantly impact human health and degrade the environment by increases in waste production.	Existing General Plan programs and policies mitigate the potential impacts of discretionary development in the unincorporated area of the County regarding waste disposal. (County Environmental Health, RWQCB, Building and Safety Division)	Feasible for projects that the County has regulatory authority over, however, accidents, errors and human disobedience always allow for the potential for impacts that are beyond the scope of regulation. Because of the rarity of such events, and the measures to deal with them through clean up and enforcement, impacts from such events, individually or cumulatively, should be less than significant
4.20 – EDUCATION FACILITIES - Schools Development in the unincorporated area and cities will create a significant demand for school facilities.	State law requires developers to pay a prescribed amount unless the school district finds that these fees are insufficient, in which case the following school facilities funding options may be available: • District could impose an alternative fee exaction (Govt. Code 65995.5). • District, or district and the County jointly, could incorporate existing school repair, and new school construction costs into a development fee (Govt. Code 66000) • District could draft, promote and pass a bond measure to finance school projects. • County could adopt an ordinance to require developers to pay fees or provide land for school facilities or both (Govt. Code 65974)	Feasible; reduces impact to less-than-significant level.

3.1 Less than Significant Adverse Impacts

- The following environmental issues were found to have no potential significant adverse impacts:

ISSUE – Impact
4.14 - TRANSPORTATION/CIRCULATION – Harbors • Unincorporated development would have no impact on harbor facilities since they are located within cities. • Cumulative demand for harbor facilities for transport of raw materials and goods and recreational boats is not regarded as significant.
4.18 - UTILITIES/ENERGY RESOURCES – Demand Unincorporated and city development will increase the demand for electrical, gas and communication facilities and services. Southern California Edison, Southern California Gas Company, and phone and cable companies are regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission and are capable of meeting the energy and communication needs of future growth within Ventura County.
4.19 – LAW ENFORCEMENT AND EMERGENCY SERVICES Development, and growth in population, will occur in the unincorporated County and those cities served by the County Sheriff's Department during the planning period. This will result in an increased demand for law enforcement services. As a result of state Proposition 172 and subsequent passage of County Ordinance 4088, the Sheriff's Department is provided a funding mechanism to keep up with those anticipated demands. Because the Sheriff's Department has this method for revenue enhancement, no significant impacts are anticipated as a result of this General Plan amendment.

3.4 Alternatives

To avoid significant, unmitigated impacts to biological resources, agricultural soils and community character caused by proposed widening of specific roads of the Regional Road Network, the following alternatives are examined:

Alternative	Significant Impacts Avoided	Significant Effects of Alternative
5.1 - No Project (General Plan remains as is)	• Loss of biological resources from increased road widening. • Loss of agricultural soils from increased road widening. • Short-term construction noise impacts from increased road widening. • Altered community character of Somis from increased road widening. • Growth inducement from land use and transportation policy exceptions for farmworker housing complexes, agricultural related uses, cultural resource sites, community sewer systems, lower income housing projects.	• Decrease of traffic LOS to "E" (unstable flow with lower operating speeds and major delays and stoppages). • Decrease in public safety (increased traffic accidents; reduced emergency response). • Increased fuel consumption of motor vehicles due to slower speeds. • Increased air pollution from motor vehicles due to slower speeds. • Adverse economic impacts from increased travel time and/or vehicle miles traveled (decreased worker productivity, delay in the transportation of goods and decreased tourism), and from prohibition of discretionary development in impacted unincorporated areas.
5.2 - Lower Level of Service (LOS) on Santa Rosa Rd. and Moorpark Rd. to LOS "E"	• Loss of biological resources from increased road widening. • Loss of agricultural soils from increased road widening. • Short-term construction noise impacts from increased road widening. • Altered community character of Somis from increased road widening.	• Traffic LOS would be "E" on these two roads (unstable flow with lower operating speeds and major delays and stoppages). • Decrease in public safety on these two roads (increased traffic accidents; reduced emergency response).

Alternative	Significant Impacts Avoided	Significant Effects of Alternative
5.3 –Additionally Lower Level of Service (LOS) on Hwys 118 and 34 in Las Posas Valley and Santa Clara Ave. to LOS "E"	• Loss of biological resources from increased road widening. • Loss of agricultural soils from increased road widening. • Short-term construction noise impacts from increased road widening. • Altered community character of Somis from increased road widening.	• Traffic LOS would be "E" on six major roads, including Central Ave. (unstable flow with lower operating speeds and major delays and stoppages). • Traffic LOS would be "F" on ~~Highway 101 and~~ Hwy 118 east of Somis (forced flow operation with low speeds and stoppages for long periods due to congestion), which would be inconsistent with State law and the CMP. • Since Highway 101 would be operating at LOS E/F by 2020, this alternative would not allow for any suitable east-west alternative route through Ventura County. • Decrease in public safety on six major roads ~~plus 101 freeway~~ (increased road rage and traffic accidents; reduced emergency response). • Increased fuel consumption of motor vehicles due to slower speeds. • Increased air pollution from motor vehicles due to slower speeds. • Adverse economic Impacts from increased travel time and/or vehicle miles traveled (decreased worker productivity, delay in the transportation of goods and decreased tourism).
5.4 - Hwy 34 Bypass Around Somis Technically ~~feasibility~~ feasible, but financial feasibility is unknown; requires approval of Caltrans and VCTC.	Altered community character of Somis from increased road widening.	• Loss of biological resources in Fox Barranca. • Loss of agricultural soils. • Closure of some existing businesses.

4. Environmental Setting, Impacts, Mitigation Measures and Residual Effects

4.1 Air Quality

In accordance with the Ventura County General Plan and the Ventura County Administrative Supplement to the CEQA Guidelines, all County agencies, departments and special districts shall utilize the air quality assessment guidelines as adopted and periodically updated by the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District (APCD). Copies of these guidelines can be obtained from the APCD, 669 County Square Drive, Ventura, CA, 93003

4.1.1 Environmental Setting

Air pollution is hazardous to health, diminishes the production and quality of many agricultural crops, reduces visibility, degrades or soils materials, and damages native vegetation. The federal government has established National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) to protect public health (primary standards); and welfare, such as property and agriculture (secondary standards). California has separate, more stringent standards. There are state and national standards for ozone (O_3), carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), sulfur dioxide (SO_2), respirable particulate matter (PM10), fine particulate matter (PM2.5), and lead (Pb). In addition, California has standards for sulfates, hydrogen sulfide, vinyl chloride, and visibility-reducing particles.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the federal agency designated to administer air quality regulation nationwide, while the California Air Resources Board (CARB) is the state agency that performs this function. Local air quality management is provided by the CARB through the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District (APCD). The CARB is responsible for controlling mobile emission sources statewide, while the APCD is responsible for enforcing the standards that apply to stationary sources in Ventura County.

The air pollutants of most concern in Ventura County are ozone and particulate matter. Ventura County is an attainment area for all ambient air quality standards except the following:

Air Pollutant	Standard	Agency	Ventura County Status
Ozone:	1 Hour	State and Federal	Non-attainment
	8 Hour	Federal	Non-attainment
$PM_{10:}$	24 Hour	State	Non-attainment
	Annual Average	State	Non-attainment
$PM_{2.5:}$	24 Hour	Federal	~~Not designated*~~ Attainment/unclassifiable
	Annual Average	State and Federal	~~Not designated*~~ Attainment/unclassifiable

- ~~*CARB recommended to the EPA that Ventura County be designated attainment for the federal PM2.5 standards. In June 2004, the EPA concurred with the CARB recommendation, and will issue its final designation in November 2004.~~

Ozone is formed in the atmosphere through complex chemical reactions involving reactive organic compounds (ROC) and nitrogen oxides (NOx) with ultraviolet energy from the sun. It is readily formed above Ventura County and other areas of Southern California owing to a combination of topographical, meteorological, and air pollutant characteristics. The primary sources of ROC in Ventura County are motor vehicles, organic solvents, the petroleum industry, and pesticides. The primary sources of NOx are motor vehicles, the petroleum industry, and power plants.

Atmospheric particulate matter is comprised of finely divided solids or liquids such as dust, soot, aerosols, fumes, and mists. The particles of primary concern are those ten microns or less in diameter. These particles have the greatest likelihood of being inhaled deep into the lungs. Human-generated particulate matter results from a variety of activities: farming, industrial processes, fossil fuel combustion, construction and demolition operations, and entrainment of road dust into the air. Natural sources of particulate matter include wind-blown dust, wildfires, and salt from sea spray.

Air quality in Ventura County is also affected by transport of pollutants into the county. Some sources of this pollution include Los Angeles County, Santa Barbara County, Outer Continental Shelf oil production and exploration activity, and shipping through the Santa Barbara Channel. Pollutant transport from Los Angeles occurs by southeasterly or easterly flow aloft. Pollutants are also transported from Ventura County coastal areas to areas further inland by westerly surface winds.

Federal Clean Air Act

The first comprehensive national air pollution legislation was the federal Clean Air Act of 1970. In 1977, the federal Clean Air Act was amended to require plans for meeting the national health-based standards "as expeditiously as practicable," but no later than December 31, 1982. However, the Clean Air Act permitted the U.S. EPA to extend the attainment date of some ozone and carbon monoxide non-attainment areas.

In 1990, the federal Clean Air Act was significantly amended. The 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) contains a number of requirements designed to improve air quality. These include motor vehicle emission limits, pollution controls on industrial facilities, use of low-polluting vehicle fuels, permit and compliance programs, and economic incentives to encourage industries to voluntarily curtail emissions.

Under the CAAA, areas that do not meet the federal one-hour ozone standard are classified according to the severity of each area's respective ozone problem. The classifications are Marginal, Moderate, Serious, Severe, and Extreme. Marginal areas are closest to meeting the federal one-hour ozone standard. Extreme areas have the worst air quality problems. Areas with more severe ozone problems have progressively more stringent requirements to meet under the CAAA. An area's classification determines how long the area has to attain the federal ozone standard. Marginal areas had three years; Moderate areas - six years; Serious areas - nine years; Severe areas - either 15 or 17 years, depending on the magnitude of their ozone problem; and, Extreme areas - 20 years. The South Coast Air Basin and the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin are the only areas in the country designated as Extreme. Ventura County is a Severe area for the federal one-hour ozone standard and must attain the standard by 2005.

Ventura County has made significant progress toward attainment of the federal one-hour ozone standard. For years 2000 - 2002, Ventura County averaged only one ozone exceedance day per year, technically meeting the federal one-hour standard, but still officially designated a federal one-hour ozone non-attainment area. However, the federal one-hour ozone standard is being replaced by the 8-hour ozone standard adopted by EPA in 1997. The EPA adopted the 8-hour ozone standard after scientific studies concluded that the one-hour standard was inadequate to protect human health.

After lengthy legal proceedings, EPA officially designated all areas of the country either attainment, non-attainment, or unclassifiable for the federal 8-hour ozone standard on April 15, 2004. The designations were based on EPA's analysis of ambient ozone levels in each area. The EPA designated Ventura County a moderate non-attainment area for the 8-hour ozone standard. As a moderate area, Ventura County is required to attain the federal 8-hour ozone standard by June 15, 2010. With the 8-hour designations in place, EPA is scheduled to revoke the federal one-hour ozone standard nationwide on June 15, 2005.

In July 1997, EPA created new ambient air quality standards for PM2.5 designed to better protect the public from the adverse effects of airborne particulate matter. The standards include an annual average and a 24-hour standard. The CARB recommended to the EPA that Ventura County be designated attainment for the federal PM2.5 standards. In June 2004, the EPA concurred with the CARB recommendation, and ~~will issue its final designation in November 2004~~ issued its final designation on December 17, 2004.

California Clean Air Act (CCAA)

The CCAA was enacted on September 30, 1988, and became effective January 1, 1989. The purpose of the CCAA is to achieve the health-based state clean air standards at the earliest practicable date. The state standards are more stringent than the federal air quality standards. Under the CCAA, district wide air emissions must be reduced at least five percent per year (averaged over three years) for each non-attainment pollutant or its precursors. A district may achieve a smaller average reduction if the district can demonstrate that, despite inclusion of every feasible measure in its air quality plan, it is unable to achieve the five percent annual reduction in emissions.

Similar to the federal Clean Air Act, the CCAA also classifies areas according to pollution levels. Under the CCAA, Ventura County is a severe ozone non-attainment area, and is a state PM10 non-attainment area. Ventura County is ~~not~~ designated attainment/unclassifiable for the state PM2.5 standard, which became effective in July 2003.

Ventura County Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP)

The 1991 AQMP was prepared in response to the CCAA. The 1991 AQMP elaborated on information contained in the 1982 and 1987 AQMPs. It also included new and modified control measures designed to move the county further toward achieving state clean air standards.

The 1994 AQMP was prepared to satisfy the planning requirements of the CAAA and to outline a strategy for meeting the federal one-hour ozone clean air standard while accommodating anticipated growth. The Plan indicated that Ventura County would not be able to attain the federal one-hour air quality standard for ozone by 2005 without inclusion of measures contained in a document called a Federal Implementation Plan (FIP).

The District prepared a revision to the 1994 AQMP in 1995. This revision updated information that had changed since the 1994 AQMP, including minor adjustments to the 1990 baseline emission inventory, actions taken by the CARB to approve additional control strategies, changes to the photochemical modeling, and several other changes. The 1995 Plan Revision indicated that Ventura County would attain the federal one-hour ozone standard by 2005 without implementation of proposed FIP measures. It focused on ways to reduce ozone levels, and did not address PM_{10}, since Ventura County is an attainment area for the federal PM10 standard. The EPA approved the 1994 AQMP and 1995 AQMP Revision on February 7, 1997.

The District prepared a 1997 AQMP Revision to update the proposed adoption and implementation dates for nine control measures that were included in the 1995 AQMP Revision. The EPA approved the 1997 AQMP Revision on April 21, 1998. The 1994 AQMP (together with the 1995, ~~and~~ 1997, and 2004 AQMP Revisions) is the current air quality management plan for Ventura County.

4.1.2 Impacts

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) classifies impacts as either "project-specific" or "cumulative." The project-specific air quality impacts of the General Plan Update are the air pollutant emissions that would be generated by the population growth and development in unincorporated areas of the County under the General Plan. The cumulative impacts are the countywide air pollutants generated by growth allowed by the city and County general plans. Under these classifications, the project-specific 2000 – 2020 air quality impacts would be the emissions from unincorporated development that would generate an approximate population increase of 20,530 persons, a dwelling unit increase of 8,130 units, and an increase in the number of jobs of 3,510 employees. The cumulative impacts are the pollutants from total County development that would generate an

approximate population increase of 153,290 persons, a dwelling unit increase of 58,050 units, and an increase in the number of jobs of 100,390 employees.

The 1994 AQMP (together with the 1995, ~~and~~ 1997, and 2004 Plan Revisions) concludes that the County will be able to demonstrate attainment of the federal one-hour ozone standard by 2005, as mandated by the CAAA. The cumulative impacts of the County and City General Plans will have a significant, adverse impact on air quality since they exceed population forecasts used in the most recently adopted AQMP. In addition, the emissions generated by the population growth and development in the unincorporated areas alone will have a significant, adverse impact on air quality since they exceed the aggregated non-growth area population forecast.

4.1.3 Mitigation Measures

The 1994 AQMP (together with the 1995, ~~and~~ 1997, and 2004 Revisions) identifies numerous measures for reducing ozone precursor emissions. Ventura County's strategy for achieving the state and federal ozone standards is concurrent reductions of ozone precursor emissions – ROC and NOx. Ozone precursor emissions can be formed or emitted from stationary sources, area sources, or mobile sources.

Stationary sources are non-mobile emission sources such as dry cleaning equipment, surface coating operations, stationary industrial engines, and petroleum production and processing facilities.

Area sources include multiple stationary emission sources such as water heaters, gas furnaces, fireplaces, and woodstoves.

Mobile sources can be grouped into two categories, on-road mobile and other mobile. On-road mobile sources include passenger cars, trucks, buses, and motorcycles. Other mobile sources include off-road vehicles, airplanes, locomotives, farm equipment, marine vessels, and lawn, garden, and utility equipment.

The Ventura County AQMP contains Area and Stationary Source Control Measures, Mobile Source Control Measures, and Transportation Control Measures (TCM). The forecasted emission reductions from control measures in the 1994 AQMP represent~~s~~ air pollutant control strategy to attain the federal ozone standard by 2005.

The County General Plan *Goals, Policies and Programs* include several additional policies to mitigate potential air quality impacts from future development:

- Policy 1.2.2-2 prohibits discretionary development that is inconsistent with the AQMP (unless overriding considerations are cited). Thus, General Plan consistency with the AQMP could be achieved through project-by-project review.
- Policy 1.2.2-3 states that discretionary development that would have a significant adverse air quality impact shall only be approved if it is conditioned with all reasonable mitigation measures to avoid, minimize, or compensate (offset) for the air quality impact.
- Policy 1.2.2-5 requires developments that are subject to APCD permit authority to comply with all applicable APCD rules and permit requirements, including the use of best available control technology (BACT) as determined by the APCD.

4.1.4 Residual Impact

Ambient ozone concentrations will continue to exceed State standards in the short term, although the 1994 AQMP (together with the 1995, ~~and~~ 1997, and 2004 Plan Revisions) predicts attainment of the federal ozone standard by the year 2005. Although the rate of development in accordance with the General Plan Update would actually be lower than the rate of development indicated by the population and dwelling unit projections contained in the 1994 AQMP through the year 2005, the proposed update is forecasting population and dwelling units through the year 2020, which exceeds the 2005 forecasts in the 1994 AQMP. Therefore, the forecasted increases in population and dwelling units could interfere with attainment of federal or state air quality standards and would, therefore, have a significant air quality impact. The 1994 AQMP is based on a 2005 population forecast of 824,874

persons, compared to a 2020 General Plan Update forecast of 906,479 persons. In addition, the 1994 AQMP forecasts 292,971 dwelling units in 2005, compared to a General Plan Update forecast of 309,758 dwelling units in 2020.

4.2 Mineral Resources

Mineral resources in Ventura County consist of *aggregate resources*, which are construction grade sand and gravel, and *petroleum resources*, which are oil and gas deposits. Mineral resource related impacts involve either a) obstructing or hampering/precluding extraction of, or access to mineral resources, or b) the impacts created by mineral extraction and processing.

4.2.1 Environmental Setting

The primary mineral resources of Ventur~~e~~a County are aggregates (sand and gravel) and petroleum (oil and gas). These resources are important to the physical and economic development of the County. Other minerals of commercial value are asphalt, clay, expansible shale, gypsum, limestone and phosphate. These other minerals do not contribute significantly to the physical development or economy of the County. For a more thorough discussion of mineral resources, refer to the County's General Plan *Resources Appendix*, Section 1.4.

Pursuant to the California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA) and its subsequent revisions, aggregate resources have been identified and mapped (see Figure 4.2-1). Those areas designated "MRZ-2" are areas where significant deposits are known to exist which, per SMARA, warrant particular protection to insure the County a long-term supply of construction material. According to the County's Mineral Resource Management Program of 1983 (which has been incorporated into the *Resources Appendix*), the County has sufficient aggregate resources to last until at least the year 2033. This program established the "Mineral Resource Protection Area" designation of the General Plan and the Mineral Resources Protection Overlay zone in order to ensure access to important mineral resources. This designation and zone cover all "MRZ-2" areas and prohibit land uses that are incompatible with mineral extraction.

Known petroleum fields are depicted in Figure 4.2-2. In 1988, petroleum constituted 2.7% of the County's total economy, but this had fallen to 1.04 % by 2000 due to growth of other sectors in the County economy. No State petroleum conservation program equivalent to SMARA exists.

4.2.2 Impacts

Any project that would directly or indirectly use aggregate products or by-products or petroleum products or by-products would have an impact on the demand for aggregate resources or petroleum resources. However, no one individual project would have a significant impact on the demand for aggregate resources because, according to the *Resources Appendix* of the General Plan there is a sufficient amount of aggregate resources to meet local demand at least until 2033 (*Resources Appendix*, pg. 25).

No individual project would have a significant impact on the demand for petroleum resources because petroleum resources are considered a world-wide, national and state-wide resource that is beyond the scope of local governments to effectively manage or control, as described in the *Resources Appendix* of the General Plan under Section 1.4.2.

With regard to energy efficiency, the Uniform Building Code regulates construction of structures supporting a reduction in demand for, and reliance upon, petroleum resources.

The potentially significant mineral resource related impacts involve either a) obstructing or hampering access to minerals or b) the impacts created by mineral extraction and processing.

Obstruction of Access

Direct obstruction of access to aggregate resources by allowing development to over-cover resource areas is not a potentially significant impact, as such obstruction is precluded by policies 1.4.2-6 through 1.4.2-9 of the General Plan *Goals, Policies and Programs* and the provisions of the Mineral Resource Protection (MRP) Overlay Zone. These policies prohibit development of incompatible uses in "MRZ-2" areas, except those already committed to other uses or within the view-shed of cities. Nonetheless, implementation of the above policies requires project-by-project review.

Oilfields do not have the protection of an overlay zone; therefore a proposed project could result in the obstruction of access to oil resources by development.

Indirect obstruction of access to mineral resources may be posed by conflicting development along mineral resource access roads. The siting of sensitive uses where they could be adversely impacted by the heavy truck traffic of mineral extraction operations could ultimately lead to calls for curtailment of trucking. This potentially significant may be mitigated by case-by-case review of discretionary projects. A Countywide mitigation/preservation program is not considered feasible as mineral access roads are transitory in nature, and the sensitivity of potential projects can only be determined via a project-by-project review.

Resource Extraction

The potential impacts from mineral extraction and processing typically include production of noise, vibration, dust, obnoxious odors, light and glare, and creation of visually offensive sites. In addition, heavy truck traffic is often involved as well. Other site-specific impacts are possible including loss of irrigated farmland or native vegetation, depending on the location of the particular development.

Mining operations in river areas or aquifer recharge areas can affect surface and groundwater quality. If mining is conducted below the present, or projected, high groundwater level, groundwater may come in contact with surface contaminants. Mining or flood control operations in river channels can affect surface water quality including increasing turbidity. In-river mining often interferes with downstream sediment transport, thereby affecting beach sand replenishment.

Mining below groundwater level results in exposure of water to the atmosphere, which causes evaporative loss of water. This evaporation can concentrate salts in the remaining water, which then re-enters the groundwater causing an increase in TDS levels. Removal of material from aquifer recharge areas can interfere with soil absorption and filtration.

Petroleum exploration, extraction and processing, in addition to those impacts discussed above, can produce air pollutants and create a risk of upset. Improperly abandoned wells can be hazardous and could cause groundwater contamination.

4.2.3 Mitigation Measures

Although all of the above impacts are possible, State and County laws, policies, ordinances, etc. would generally prevent these impacts from occurring or would reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level.

The Zoning Ordinance requires a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for all mining and petroleum operations, thus subjecting them to CEQA review and conditioning. Mining operations have to implement reclamation plans to return mined lands to a condition in keeping with protection of the environment and the public health, safety and welfare. All mining and drilling projects have to comply with APCD requirements for reducing air pollutant emissions including dust. The policies of the General Plan, the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, adopted standard permit conditions, State laws and guidelines pertaining to mining and petroleum development, and the County's ongoing enforcement program, should ensure that impacts to neighboring land uses would not be significant.

Additionally, the State Department of Mines and Geology monitors construction in the vicinity of abandoned wells to prevent exposure of people to hazards.

Nevertheless, some mitigation measures that are provided by standard permit conditions or through subsequent CEQA review, and which may be necessary to reduce significant impacts to a less-than-significant level, may be found to be infeasible. In such cases, the decision-making body may still approve the project if it finds there are overriding considerations. In these cases, significant impacts may occur. However, these potential impacts are speculative.

4.2.4 Residual Impact

The potential impact of future discretionary development allowed by the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance on the access to aggregate resources is less-than significant through the provisions of the MRP overlay zone.

The impact of future discretionary development on the access to petroleum resources is potentially significant, but must be reviewed on a project-by project basis because the impact is too speculative to be addressed at this time.

The impact of future discretionary development on access roads to aggregate and petroleum resources is potentially significant, but must be reviewed on a project-by-project basis because the impact is too speculative to be addressed at this time.

Imposing General Plan policies and Zoning Ordinance standards on future discretionary development can substantially reduce the potential significant impacts from mineral extraction and processing on the environment. However, future environmental analysis may determine that some mitigation measures may not be feasible to reduce some impacts to a less-than-significant level and the decision-making body may find overriding considerations and allow the significant impacts to occur.

Figure 4.2-1
Aggregate Resources – South Half

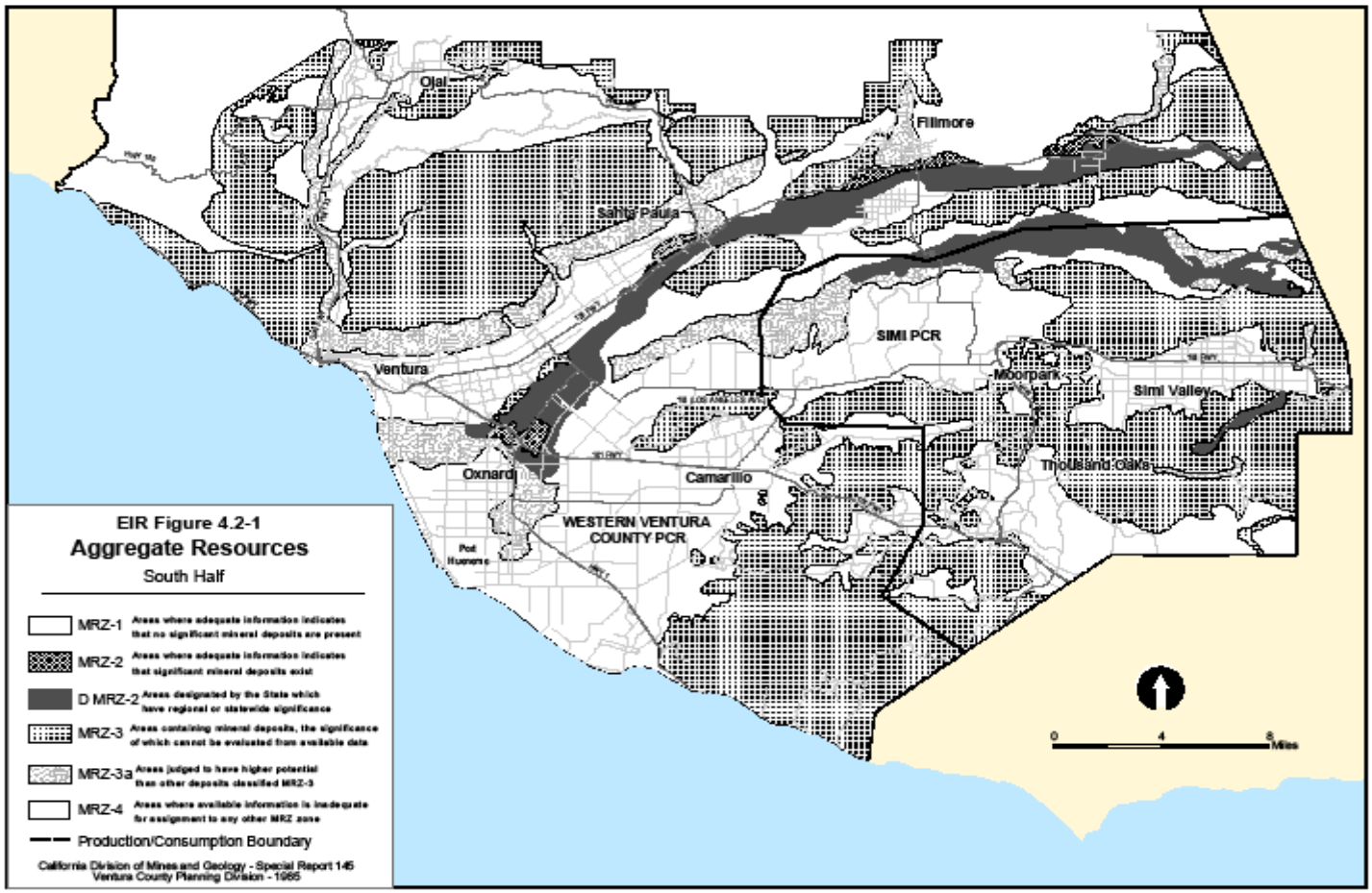
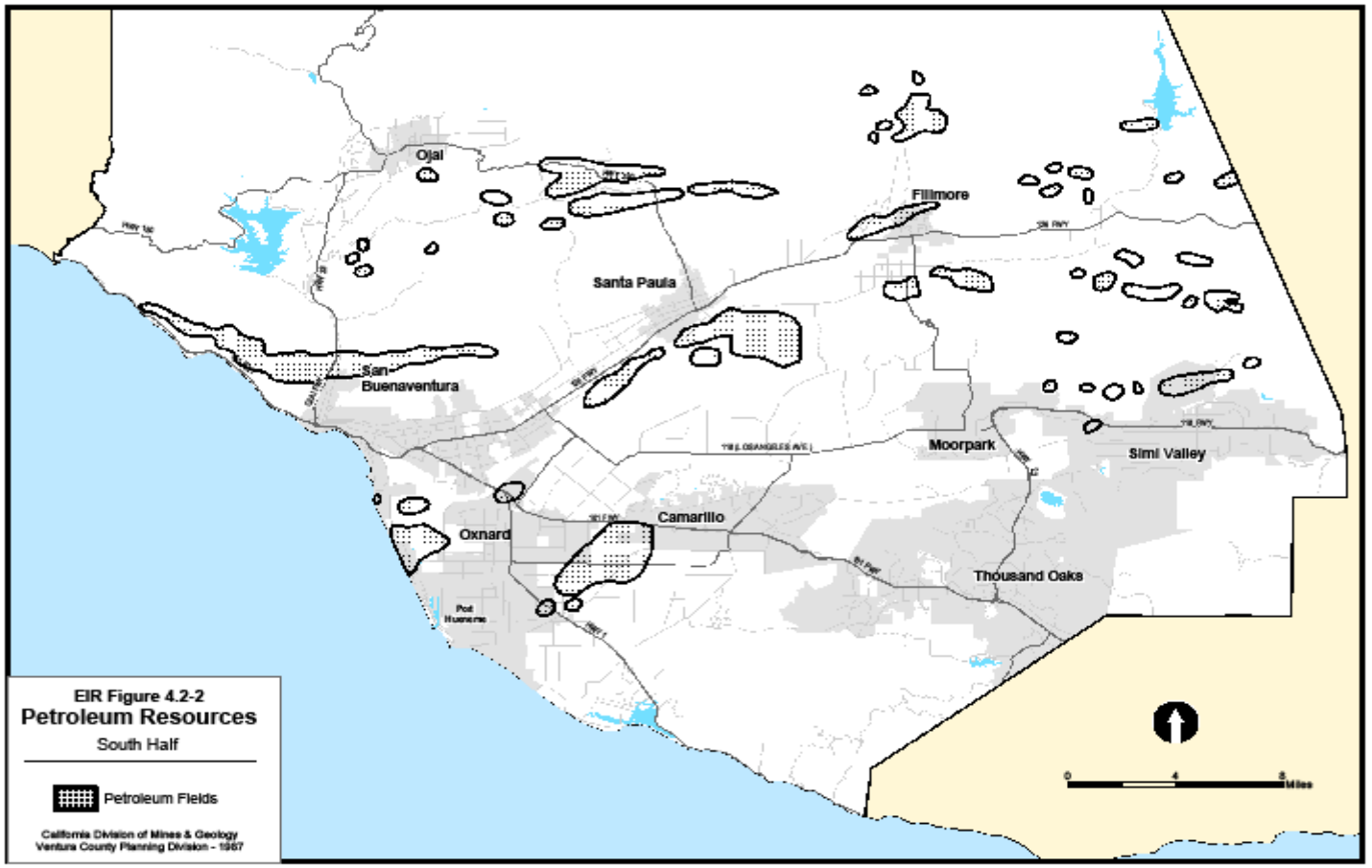

Ojai
Fillmore
Santa Paula
SIMI PCR
Ventura
Moorpark
Simi Valley
Thousand Oaks
Oxnard
Camarillo
WESTERN VENTURA COUNTY PCR
Port Hueneme
EIR Figure 4.2-1
Aggregate Resources
South Half
MRZ-1 Areas where adequate information indicates that no significant mineral deposits are present
MRZ-2 Areas where adequate information indicates that significant mineral deposits exist
D MRZ-2 Areas designated by the State which have regional or statewide significance
MRZ-3 Areas containing mineral deposits, the significance of which cannot be evaluated from available data
MRZ-3a Areas judged to have higher potential than other deposits classified MRZ-3
MRZ-4 Areas where available information is inadequate for assignment to any other MRZ zone
Production/Consumption Boundary
California Division of Mines and Geology - Special Report 145
Ventura County Planning Division - 1985
0
4
8
Miles

Figure 4.2-2
Petroleum Resources – South Half



4.3 Biological Resources

The Ventura County *Initial Study Assessment Guidelines* define the criteria and methodology for determining whether a proposed project may have a significant adverse impact on biological resources. Biological resources include natural plant and animal species and their habitats, communities, and ecosystems. The *Guidelines* identify the following as significant biological resources: endangered, threatened or rare species, wetland habitats, coastal habitats, migration corridors for fish or wildlife, and locally important species/communities.

Thresholds of significance for biological resources are determined on a case-by-case basis by a qualified biologist. A significant impact to endangered, threatened, or rare species would occur if a project directly or indirectly reduces the species population, reduces species habitat, or restricts reproductive capacity. A significant impact to wetland habitat would result from the direct reduction, or indirect impact on, wetland habitats that are deemed significant. According to the State Coastal Act and the County's Local Coastal Program, virtually any direct reduction of, or indirect impact to, a Coastal Habitat could be considered significant. Likewise, a significant impact to a migration corridor may result if a project would substantially interfere with the use of said area by fish or wildlife. This could occur through elimination of native vegetation, erection of physical barriers, or the intimidation of fish or wildlife via introduction of noise, light, development or increased human presence. Due to the diversity of species and communities represented, in order to determine the potential significance of impacts on locally important species/communities, review by a qualified biologist is required.

4.3.1 Environmental Setting

As stated, Ventura County's biological resources include natural plant and animal species and their habitats, communities, and ecosystems. Many of the County's diverse biological resources are described in detail in the General Plan *Resources Appendix*.

Endangered, Threatened, or Rare Species

Ventura County is host to over 100 special status species. These are species of plants and animals that are designated endangered, threatened or rare by the California Fish and Game Commission or the U.S. Secretary of Commerce; additionally, there are many species whose survival and reproduction in the wild are in immediate jeopardy and are considered to be sensitive to further intrusion upon their habitat. Species that are not listed under the federal Endangered Species Act or the California Endangered Species Act, but which nonetheless are declining at a rate that could result in a designation of endangered, threatened, or rare are classified as species of special concern. A full listing of these plant and animal species, with their current state and federal designations is found in Appendix 8.2 of this EIR. The habitat locations of these native plant and animal species are roughly depicted in Figures 4.3-1a, 4.3-1b, 4.3-2a, and 4.3-2b.

Wetland Habitat

Wetland habitats are lands transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is periodically covered with shallow water. Wetlands may also include open water habitats like lakeshores. Many of Ventura's special status species are dependent upon wetland habitats for their survival. Wetlands include, but are not limited to, marshes, bogs, sloughs, vernal pools, wet meadows, river and stream overflows, mudflats, ponds, springs, and seeps. Wetlands and riparian areas support high species diversity and abundance and are consequently the most valuable wildlife habitats. Figures 4.3-3a and 4.3-3b show both the most current National Wetlands Inventory maps for Ventura County (updated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2005) and the Ventura County Watershed Protection District's map of rivers and streams. ~~National Wetland Inventory maps are currently being updated for most of the county and will be available in late 2005.~~

Coastal Habitat

Environmentally sensitive coastal habitats in Ventura County's Coastal Zone include coastal waters, intertidal areas, estuaries, lakes, wetlands, and sand dunes which support plant or animal life. There

are approximately 42 miles of coastline in Ventura County, much of which is within the County's jurisdiction. Along the coast, intertidal and subtidal diversity creates feeding habitat for a variety of water birds and the sandy beaches serve as resting habitats for shorebirds. Additionally, subtidal rock outcrops provide anchorage for kelp, which in turn provides habitat for a multitude of organisms. Approximately 80 acres of coastal dune habitat is located in unincorporated Ventura County. Sand dunes provide shelter for freshwater habitat from wind and erosion and help to support a variety of coastal species. Likewise, coastal wetlands foster a variety of habitats for unique flora and fauna in the county.

Migration Corridors for Fish and Wildlife

Migration corridors connect two large habitat areas and allow freedom of movement for animals. In addition, they often provide the only available habitat for species that occupy the corridor area. Biologists have identified areas that experience recurrent aquatic, riparian, or terrestrial species movement that are crucial to these species as migration corridors or habitat linkages. These migration corridors encourage preservation of plant and animal populations by allowing greater access to food and a larger gene pool. Barriers in Ventura County include large developed areas, barren lands, and roadways.

Ventura County hosts a wide diversity of wildlife including mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, fish and invertebrates. Some of these species migrate along ridgelines in the mountainous terrain where there are fewer interfaces with urban uses. Other species migrate along the arroyos, rivers and other riparian and wetland corridors, where urban development is nearer and the potential for adverse impacts much greater when these natural habitats are encroached upon.

A map of known migration corridors located in the south half of Ventura County was prepared by the South Coast Wildlands Project in their 2000 *Missing Linkages Report*. A 1992 study completed by Envicon that focused on wildlife movement in the Santa Susana mountains reveals additional migration corridors in east Ventura County. Figure 4.3-4 depicts a preliminary mapping of identified migration corridors within southern Ventura County. The corridors reflected in Figure 4.3-4 show the primary habitat linkages that allow movement of wildlife from the Los Padres National Forest in the western Transverse Mountain Range to the Santa Monica Mountains located in southeastern Ventura County. In addition, passages through wetlands and riparian habitat are also delineated.

Migration corridors in the north half of Ventura County have not yet been identified and mapped. ~~Several hundred sensitive species of vertebrates occupy the varied habitats and topography of the Los Padres National Forest.~~ The Los Padres National Forest is occupied by a wide range of species that are deemed sensitive by the U.S. Forest Service. These species are identified on the U.S. Forest Service's *List of Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species of Los Padres National Forest*, dated January 2004.

Locally Important Species and Communities

The diverse topography and climate of Ventura County provide an environment where a number of plant and animal communities exist. ~~Unique vegetation~~ Locally important communities include types of coastal sage scrub, sub-alpine forest, riparian woodland, and desert chaparral, among others. Unique species range from mammals and invertebrates to various species of birds, fish, and reptiles. Some of these are locally important species or communities that have been identified by local biologists to be characteristic of or unique to the county or region. Others are considered candidates for a designation of endangered, threatened, or rare by the California Fish and Game Commission or the U.S. Secretary of Commerce. On March 12, 2004 the County of Ventura hosted a regional Sensitive Species Workshop to identify the County's locally important plant and animal species. Local biologists are aiding the Planning Division in drafting a list of locally important species that will be available in 2005.

4.3.2 Impacts

CEQA states that a project may have a significant effect on biological resources if it has the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species,

cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self sustaining levels, threaten or eliminate a plant or animal community, or reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal. CEQA further classifies environmental impacts as either "project specific" or "cumulative".

The proposed General Plan Update has the potential to adversely affect biological resources. The planned widening of roads in the Regional Road Network will have a direct, significant impact on streambed wetlands and wildlife migration corridors, and may have impacts on other biological resources as well. Potential increases in building coverage for agricultural-related uses in Agricultural and Open Space designations, creation of substandard sized parcels for Farmworker Housing complexes in the Agricultural and Open Space designations, allowing community sewage treatment facilities in Rural, Open Space, and Agricultural designated areas, and the overall increase in the number of dwelling units, population, and employment in the unincorporated areas projected to 2020 may have a significant direct or indirect impact on biological resources, however, the extent of the impact is only generally known.

Project specific impacts include construction of a Highway 33 bypass route through Casitas Springs. This proposed four lane bypass road with realigned bicycle and equestrian trail would be constructed on the east bank of the Ventura River with potentially significant adverse impacts on the animal species that use this wetland habitat. The General Plan designates Casitas Springs as an “existing community”; therefore, significant environmental impacts to wetlands may occur if a finding of overriding considerations is made. The Ventura River functions as a movement corridor for many terrestrial, aquatic and riparian species. The project area contains natural riparian, native coastal sage scrub and oak woodland vegetation, which provide nesting locations for birds, federally endangered steelhead trout, and habitat for a variety of other species. The San Antonio creek drains into the Ventura River at the proposed site of the preferred bypass route. In addition to construction of a new bridge over the flood channel, widening of the San Antonio bridge would likely be required. The proposed bridge construction/widening to accommodate the Highway 33 realignment may hinder or alter wildlife movement. The closer the bridge is constructed to the river, the greater the potential for negative impacts.

Likewise, the widening of existing roads proposed in the Regional Road Network to 2020 would potentially increase barriers to wildlife movement and facilitate increased traffic through habitat areas. This in turn may contribute to higher mortality rates for wildlife, particularly where suitable alternate passages are not provided. Migration corridors identified in Figure 4.3-4 that may be impacted by proposed expansion of the County Regional Road Network include Santa Rosa Road between the city limits of Camarillo and Moorpark Road, and Moorpark Road between Santa Rosa Road and the city limits of Moorpark. Both county roads are planned for widening from two to four lanes by 2020. In addition, State Highway 118 between Highway 34 and the City of Moorpark is slated to increase from two to four lanes in size. Potential impacts to the proposed widening of State Highway 23 were addressed by Caltrans and the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration in the environmental document adopted for that project. (FONSI/Negative Declaration, December 2000). No biological impacts were determined as a result of the analysis for that widening.

Each of these roads acts as a potential barrier to wildlife movement in the network of migration corridors located roughly between the Las Posas Hills to the northwest, the Santa Susana Mountains to the north and the Santa Monica Mountains to the south and southeast. Focal species identified by the South Coast Wildlands Project in this area that require habitat connectivity include the Bigberry manzanita, valley oak trees, California walnut trees, harvester ants, the Chalcedon checkerspot butterfly, damselflies, the western toad, scorpions, western whiptail snakes, California king snake, southern steelhead trout, cactus wren, loggerhead shrike, California thrasher, acorn woodpecker, desert woo drat, brush rabbit, mule deer, badgers, and mountain lions. A more focused study by Sandra Ng and others published in *Biological Conservation* in 2004 identified the use of drainage culverts, livestock tunnels, and surface roads or wide stream crossings by wild mammals that used them to gain passage under Highway 101, State Route 23, and Highway 118 in Ventura County. Mammals known to have passed through one or more passages included: deer mice, woodrats, ground squirrels, cottontail rabbits, opossums, striped skunks, spotted skunks, raccoons, coyotes, mountain lions, bobcats, and mule deer.

Upland, hilltop connectivity for terrestrial wildlife such as bobcats, coyotes, mule deer, and mountain lions is provided by the largely natural ridge of the Las Posas Hills. The upland slopes contain vegetation dominated by coast live oak woodland and coastal sage scrub. Dry plant communities of grassland and chaparral dominate lower elevation vegetation on the valley floor. This vegetation provides a natural movement corridor for smaller animals such as small and medium-sized mammals, reptiles, foxes, and raptors. In the Tierra Rejada Valley, the Santa Rosa arroyo is an intermittent creek that provides an east-west movement corridor for riparian and terrestrial species. The Tierra Rejada Hills directly to the east of the Las Posas Hills provide a northern link to the Los Alamos Canyon creek, which crosses under Highway 118 and drains from the south slopes of Big Mountain in the Santa Susana Mountains. This is a terrestrial/riparian habitat that allows movement from Big Mountain through the Tierra Rejada Hills to the Simi Hills, which ultimately provide a southern link to the Oakbrook Regional Park and the Santa Monica National Recreation Area. Existing tunnels, culverts, and underpasses contribute to the viability of these migration corridors.

Indirect impacts on biological resources may result from new development near habitat areas and the subsequent increase in recreational activity in or near resource areas. Greater population densities and a more developed transportation infrastructure may result in secondary impacts to vegetation and wildlife. For example, native vegetation could be affected by the introduction of non-native species and urban and agricultural development in areas presently covered with native vegetation. Wildlife may likewise be impacted by the increases in noise, light, glare, domesticated animals, and traffic that result from increases in population and development. Potentially significant impacts to rare, threatened, endangered, and candidate species or locally important species and communities are also possible. Impacts would be most severe where destruction of unique or locally important plant communities, particularly larger intact natural communities that provide wildlife habitat could occur. As the most significant source of habitat, wetlands are critical. Any development near wetlands would have a potentially adverse impact on many of Ventura's special status species. These might include an overall reduction in natural habitats that support viable plant wildlife populations, increased habitat fragmentation, and a greater frequency of invasive plant and animal infestations.

Cumulative project impacts would result from increases in population, dwelling units, and employment in the county as a whole. The countywide population is projected to increase by 161,811 persons between 2000 and 2020. The public infrastructure improvements necessary to accommodate the population growth and development allowed by the cities and the Ventura County General Plan may severely impact native vegetation and species. The potential impacts on biological resources generated by this growth will be significant and largely unavoidable, particularly in areas outside of the Los Padres National Forest boundaries.

4.3.3 Mitigation Measures

Mitigation of significant impacts to biological resources is set forth in Section 1.5 of the *Goals, Policies and Programs* portion of the Ventura County General Plan, and additional mitigation measures are discussed in Section 1.5 of the General Plan *Resources Appendix*.

General Plan policy 1.5.2-1 includes a requirement that all discretionary development with the potential to impact biological resources be evaluated by a qualified biologist to assess impacts. Policy 1.5.2-5 further requires consultation with US Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Department of Fish and Game, National Audubon Society and Native Plant Society on a project-by-project basis. The design of discretionary projects must be altered to avoid direct impacts on biological resources. When such impacts are unavoidable, further mitigation measures must be implemented to reduce such impacts to a less-than-significant level unless mitigation is infeasible and overriding considerations are cited (policy 1.5.2-2).

Discretionary development proposed within 300 feet of a marsh, small wash, intermittent lake, intermittent stream, spring, or perennial stream is required by General Plan policy 1.5.2-3 to be evaluated by a qualified biologist for potential impacts on wetland habitats. Any significant impacts must be mitigated to a less than significant level in order to receive project approval unless the site of the project is located on a parcel designated "Urban" or "Existing Community" by the General Plan. A finding of overriding considerations may be adopted for parcels with these designations. However, to

create a protective buffer, all discretionary development is required to be located a minimum of 100 feet from significant wetland habitat (policy 1.5.2-4).

Pursuant to General Plan program 1.5.3-2, the Planning Division maintains a list of qualified environmental consultants to complete Initial Studies and environmental analyses. To provide consistency, the Initial Study Guidelines provide a standard methodology for review of environmental impacts on biological resources. This includes early consultation with the California State Department of Fish and Game for all discretionary projects that may have an adverse impact on wetland habitat or endangered, threatened and rare species. Other state and federal agencies such as the California Coastal Commission, the California Native Plant Society, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NOAA Fisheries, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the National Audubon Society are likewise notified when projects that affect biological resources under their purview may be significantly impacted.

Additional measures that may further reduce potential impacts to biological resources include efforts to map existing resources (Program 1.5.3-4). Current policies require that new discretionary projects be assessed for impacts to wildlife migration corridors; however, to date these corridors have not been adequately mapped. The County of Ventura Planning Division is implementing a program to acquire detailed spatial data that will delineate known biological resources throughout the county, including species distributions, wetland habitats, vegetation communities and wildlife corridors. This spatial data for biological resources will be utilized to record locations and develop guidelines to identify appropriate mitigation measures and conditions during project review. In the future, existing land use policies that affect biological resources will be updated to establish a Biological Resource Protection overlay designation. However, until these programs are implemented, the potential for significant adverse impacts upon ~~l~~Locally ~~i~~Important species or communities to wildlife migration corridors remains.

As stated, current General Plan policies identify wildlife migration corridors as biological resources to be considered when evaluating the impacts of discretionary development and the development of potential mitigation measures for a project. Since completion of the previous General Plan update, new research accentuates the sensitivity of Ventura County wildlife corridors and the impact of highway and floodway expansions, which can increase the fragmentation of habitats for wide-ranging species. In response to this new information, Planning staff recommends that a new policy be added to Section 1.5.2 of the General Plan *Goals, Policies, and Programs*. The text of this policy would read:

> "Based on the review and recommendation of a qualified biologist, the design of road and floodplain improvements shall be designed to incorporate all feasible measures to accommodate wildlife passage."

Feasible measures, as referenced, may include simple improvements such as additional fencing and habitat restoration to help direct wildlife to existing underpasses and drainage culverts for safe passage. The proposed language was reviewed and approved by both the County Transportation Department and the County Watershed Protection District.

4.3.4 Residual Impact

The development allowed under the County General Plan could create potentially significant impacts on biological resources that cannot be mitigated to a less-than-significant level. The combined direct and indirect consequences of development in unincorporated areas may be significant due to growth related factors such as increased human presence in sensitive areas and the subsequent increase in traffic, air pollution, road widening, and increased recreational use of habitat areas. To date, natural habitats have already been severely fragmented and lost due to development in the unincorporated County and many sensitive species no longer occupy remaining degraded habitat. The threshold of sustainability for the remaining species and their habitats is unclear. It is not known how these species and communities will respond to even greater reductions in size and quality of the remaining habitat areas.

Figure 4.3-1a
Endangered, Threatened, and Rare Animals – North Half

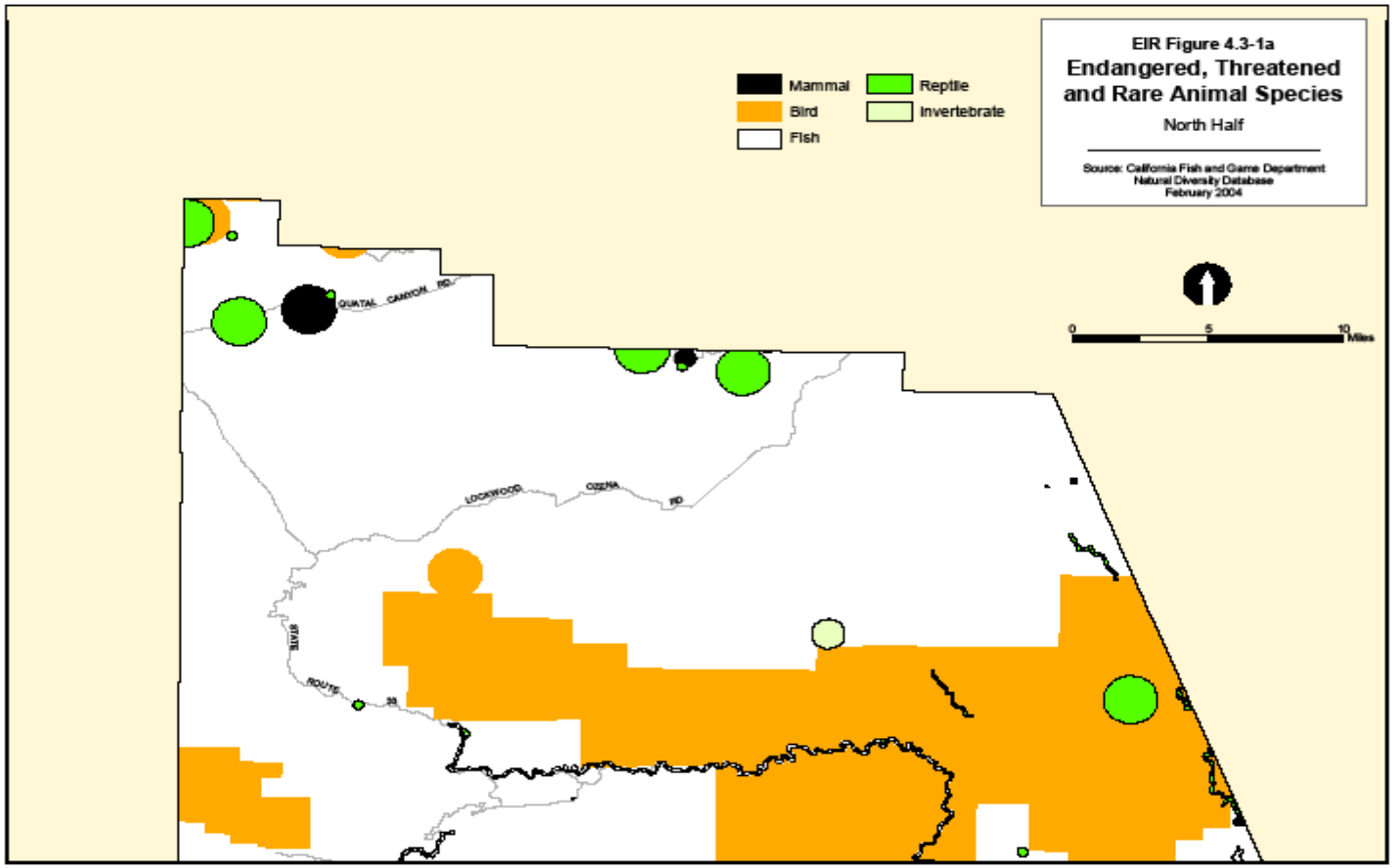


Figure 4.3-1b
Endangered, Threatened, and Rare Animals – South Half

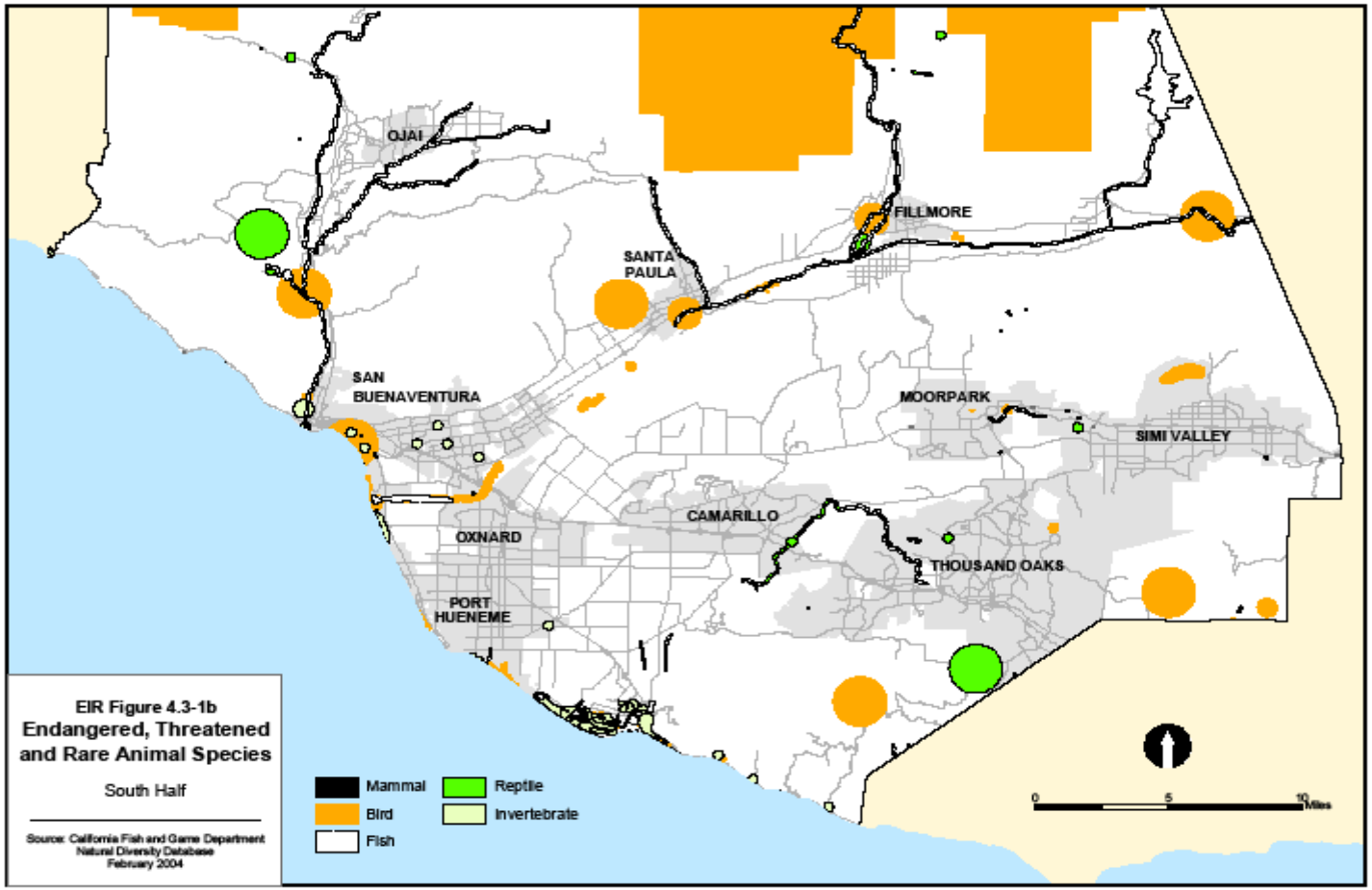


Figure 4.3-2a
Endangered, Threatened, and Rare Plants and Natural Communities – North Half

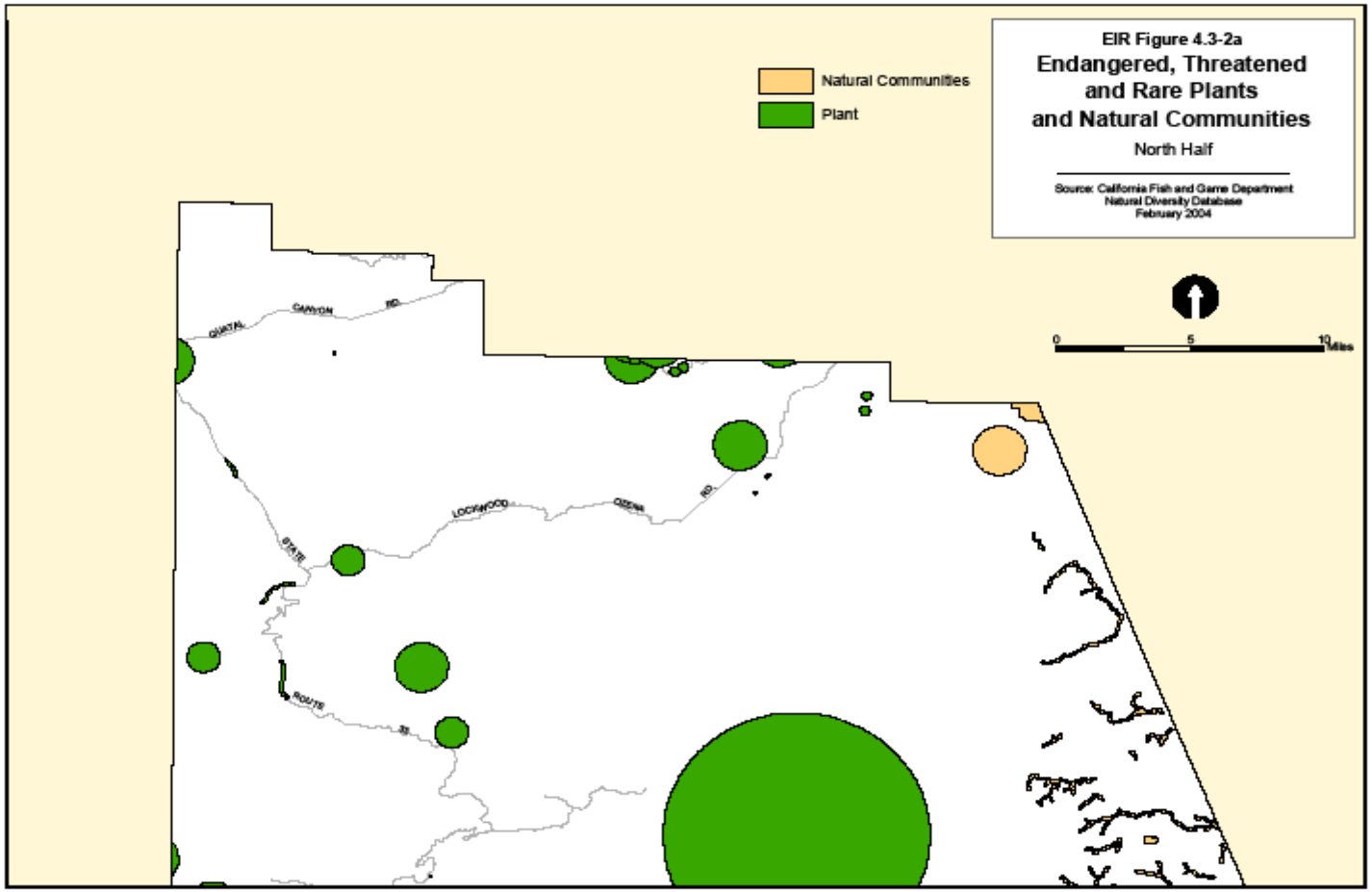


Figure 4.3-2b
Endangered, Threatened, and Rare Plants and Natural Communities – South Half

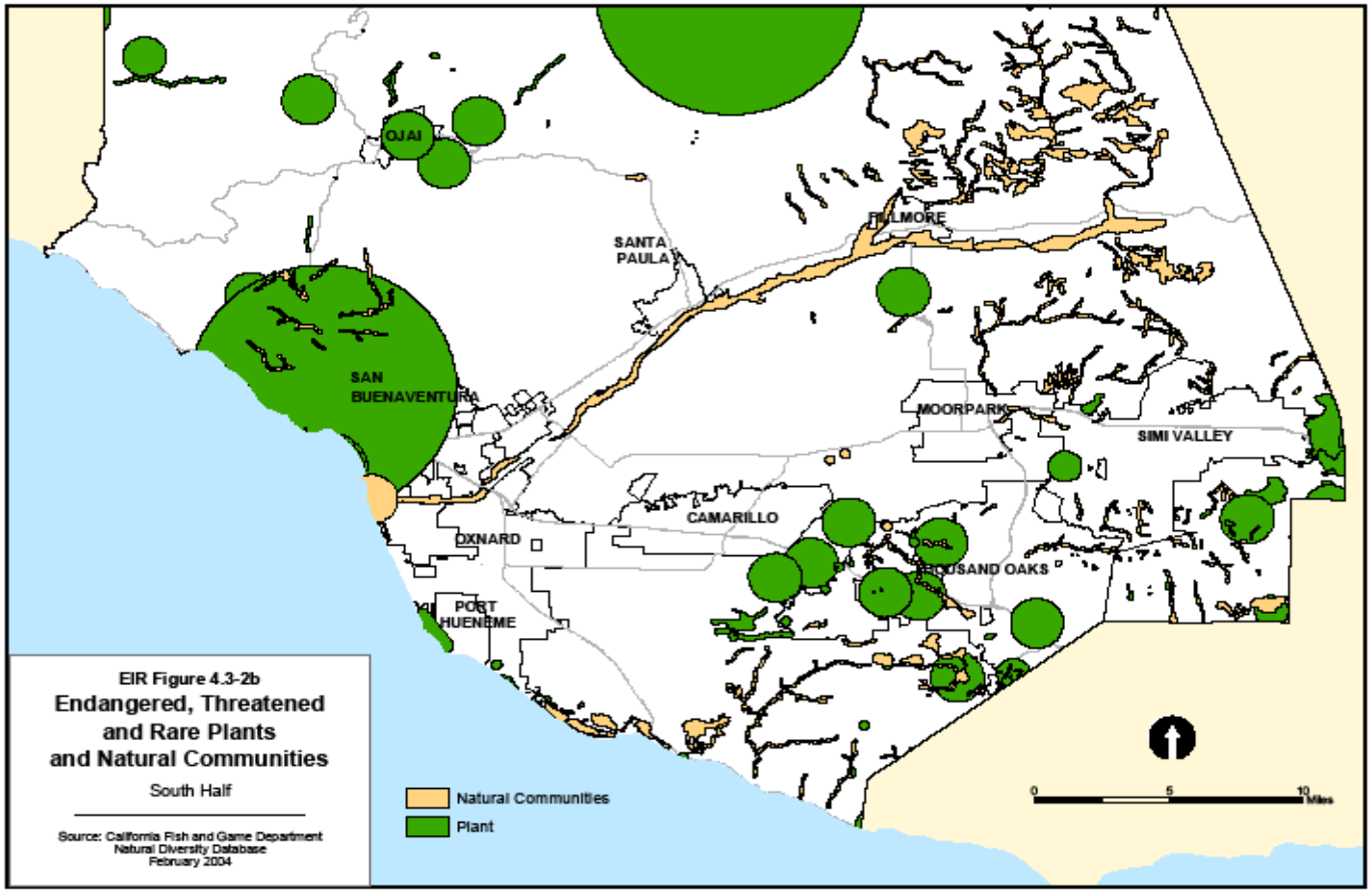


Figure 4.3-3a
~~National Wetlands Inventory~~ Water Bodies and Wetlands of Ventura County– North Half

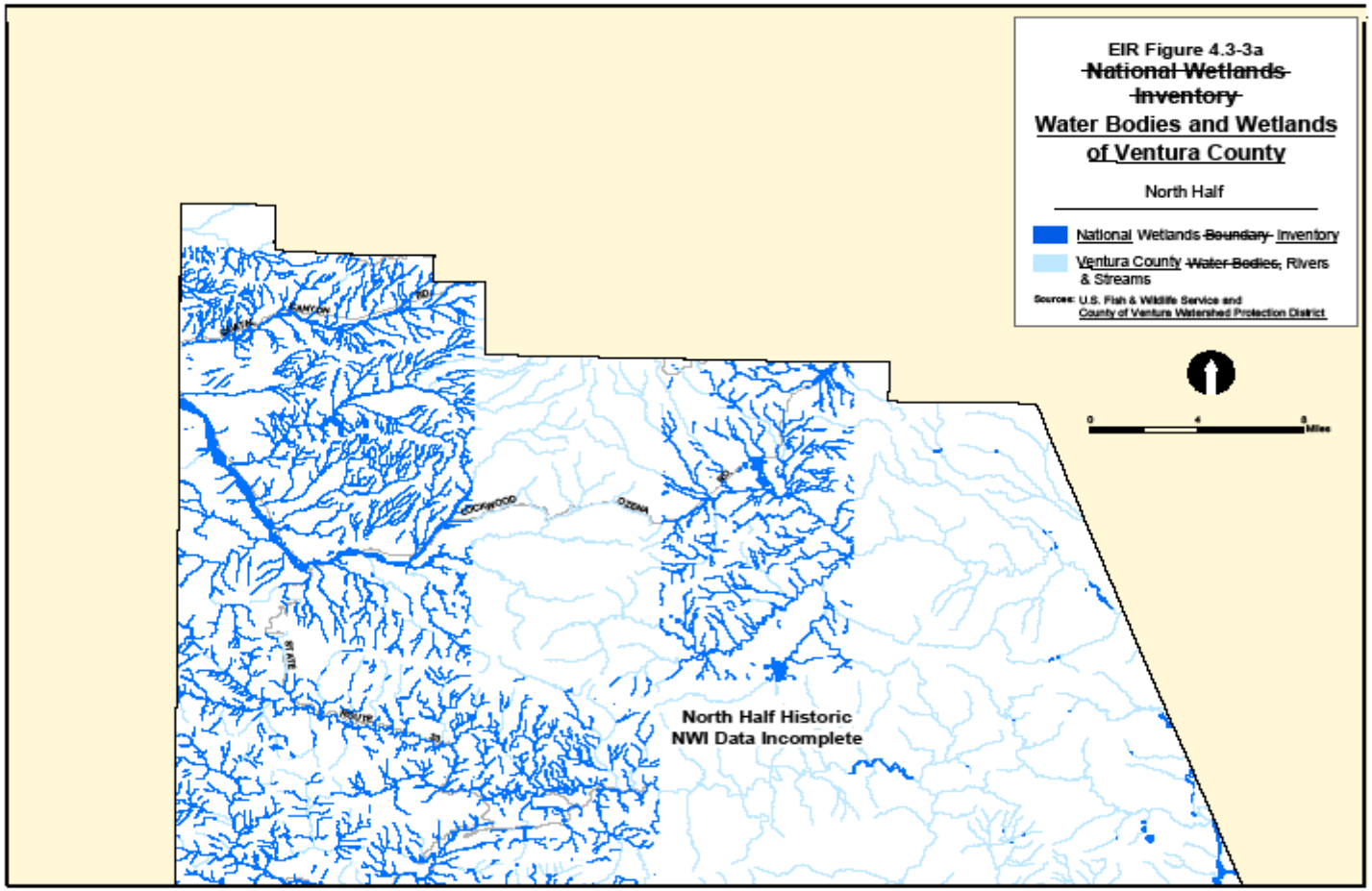

EIR Figure 4.3-3a
~~National Wetlands Inventory~~
Water Bodies and Wetlands of Ventura County
North Half
National Wetlands ~~Boundary~~ Inventory
Ventura County ~~Water Bodies~~, Rivers & Streams
Sources: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and County of Ventura Watershed Protection District
0
4
8
Miles
North Half Historic NWI Data Incomplete

Figure 4.3-3b
~~National Wetlands Inventory~~ Water Bodies and Wetlands of Ventura County – South Half

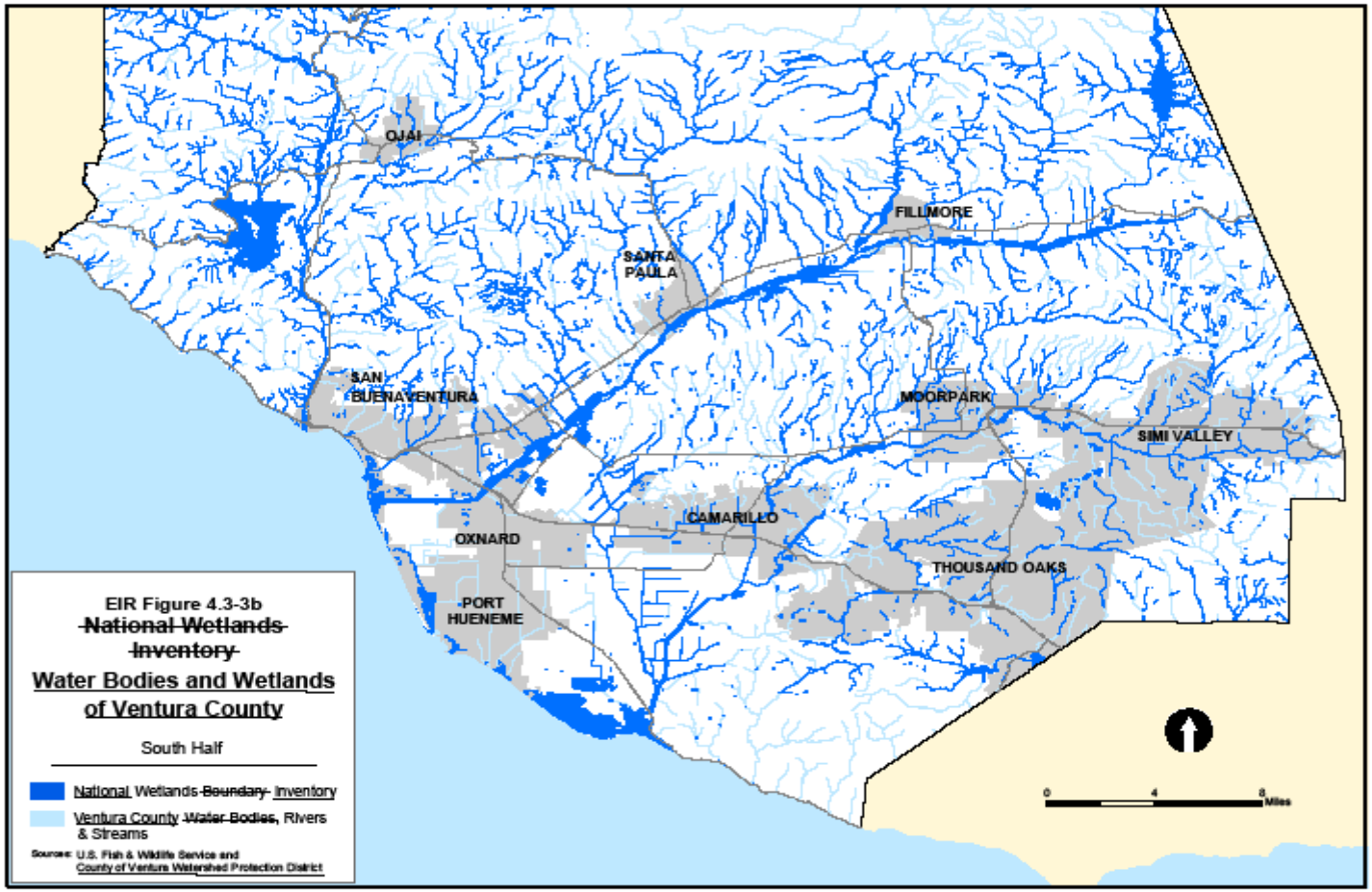
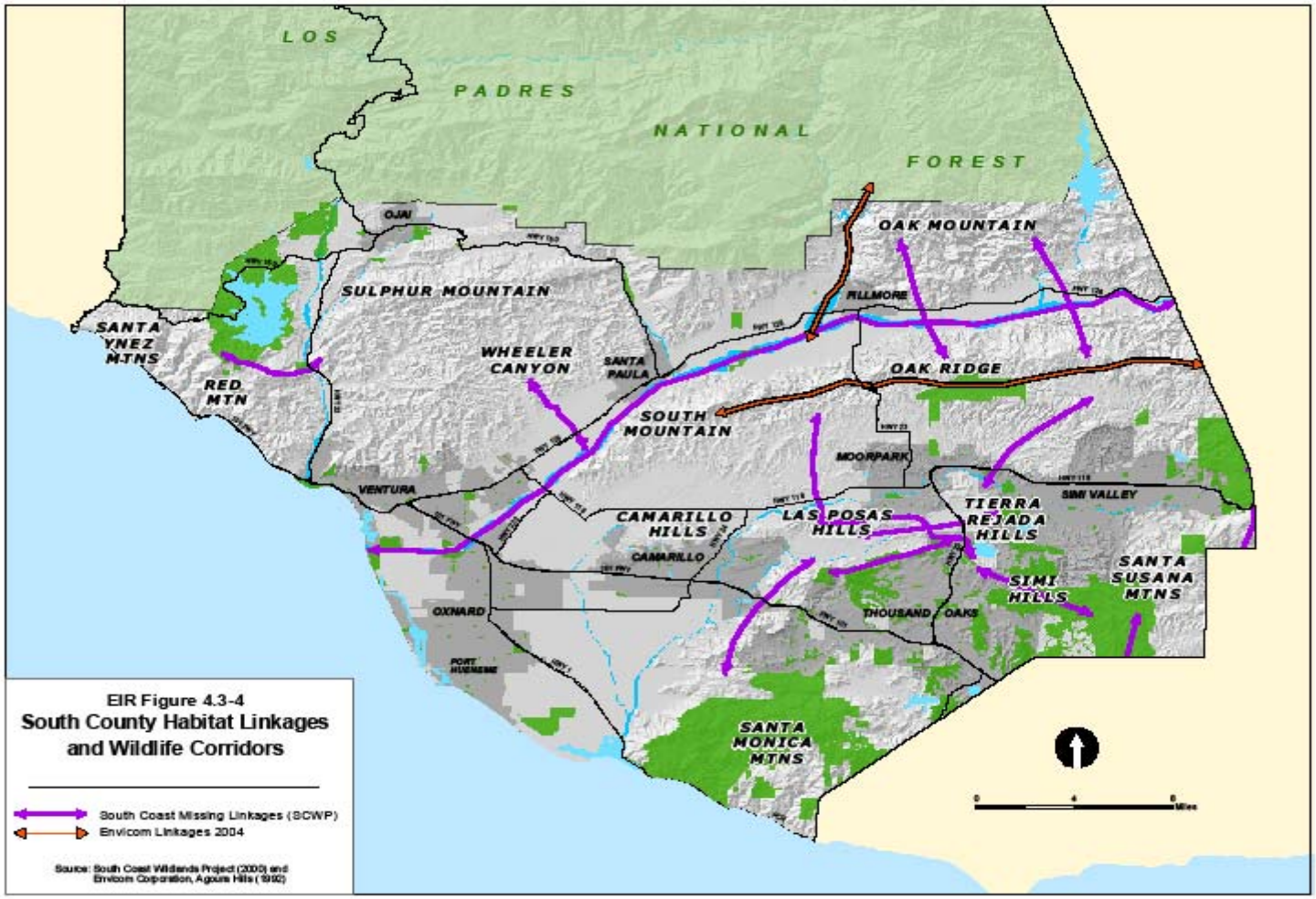


Figure 4.3-4
South County Habitat Linkages and Wildlife Corridors



4.4 Agricultural Resources

The Ventura County *Initial Study Assessment Guidelines* define the criteria and methodology for determining whether a proposed project may have a significant adverse impact on agricultural resources. Any proposed non-agricultural development/land use that results in the following would have a potentially significant impact:

- Loss of soils designated Prime, Statewide Importance, Unique or Local Importance;
- Use of the same water resources as agriculture when the use is for non-agricultural purposes;
- Increased dust, reduced solar access, or elimination of windbreaks within one-half mile of a property currently in, or suitable for, agricultural production;
- Decrease in beneficial organisms or natural or man-made protection against harmful biological organisms within one-half mile of a property currently in, or suitable for, agricultural production.
- Location of incompatible land uses in proximity to agricultural land resulting in increased vandalism, pilferage, trespass or impact from chemical spraying.

4.4.1 Environmental Setting

Ventura County's agriculture plays a vital role in the local economy and consistently ranks among the most profitable in California. The temperate local climate, the availability of water and level topography, and the depth of high quality soils allows a wide diversity of crops to be grown, harvested, packed and shipped from the county. In 2001, the production of crops year round helped Ventura County agriculture rank tenth among California counties in agricultural revenues.

Agricultural resources include lands that are used to grow crops for human and animal use, or for livestock forage. These might include seasonal row crops, citrus orchards, and alfalfa. The most fertile soil is located in the Oxnard plain in portions of the unincorporated county and within the City of Oxnard. This land is actively farmed. The Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner compiles a Crop and Livestock Report annually. The 2002 Report included ~~T~~the ten ~~leading~~ highest value county crops. They are shown ~~below~~ in rank order by dollar value ~~in 2002~~ below. The most notable recent trends have shown an increase in the number of acres devoted to strawberry crops and nursery stock. A steady decline in the production of oranges, lettuce, and broccoli has persisted for the last decade.

Crop	Value in US Dollars
Strawberries	297,924,000
Lemons	182,853,000
Nursery Stock	173,669,000
Celery	114,707,000
Avocados	99,341,000
Cut Flowers	40,349,000
Tomatoes	37,720,000
Peppers	32,069,000
Valencia Oranges	24,910,000
Raspberries	19,963,000

In addition to these crops, navel oranges, livestock, and numerous vegetable row crops make significant contributions to Ventura's agricultural economy.

The ~~U.S. Soil Conservation Service~~ Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) inventories county farmland by categorizing it in classes based on the productive capability of the land. Figure 4.4-1 shows the ~~U.S. Soil Conservation Service's~~ NCRS inventory of important farmlands in south Ventura County. In the Important Farmlands Inventory (IFI) used by the ~~c~~County, the areas with the highest agricultural potential are classified as "Prime", or "Statewide Importance", followed by "Unique", "Local Importance", "Grazing", and "Urban". Prime farmlands are irrigated soils over 40 inches deep with water holding capacity of 4 inches or more. Farmlands of Statewide Importance are land other than Prime that has a good combination of physical and chemical characteristics. Unique farmlands are lands other than Prime farmland or of Statewide Importance that are currently used for the production of specific high value food and fiber crops such as citrus, avocados, vegetables, etc. In 2003, farmland of Prime and Statewide Importance in Ventura County represented ~~87,371~~ 77,887 acres (45,058 acres of Prime and 32,829 acres of Statewide Importance). Unique farmlands comprised ~~23,111~~ 27,096 acres countywide in 2003. The criteria for farmlands of Local Importance includes ~~uses such as production of food, fiber, forage and oilseed crops on lands that are not identified as having statewide importance~~ soils that are listed as Prime or of Statewide Importance that are not irrigated, and soils growing dryland crops such as beans, grain, dryland walnuts, and dryland apricots. In 2003 there were ~~8,033~~ 15,752 acres of farmland defined as being of Local Importance.

Farmlands classified as Prime, Unique, or of Statewide Importance are given special consideration in CEQA when converted to non-agricultural uses. CEQA provides a definition for "agricultural land" as Prime farmland, farmland of Statewide Importance or Unique farmland as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture land inventory and monitoring criteria, as modified for California. However, the County's *Initial Study Assessment Guidelines* require assessment of impacts on Locally Important farmland in addition to impacts on irrigated farmlands.

4.4.2 Impacts

Significant direct, indirect and growth inducing impacts are expected on agricultural resources countywide as a result of the proposed focused General Plan Update. The following discussion addresses both direct and indirect impacts. Growth inducing impacts are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.24 of this document.

Direct Impacts

The General Plan identifies the road widening necessary to ensure that the Regional Road Network will operate at an acceptable level of service to 2020. Much of the prospective road widening would occur in Agricultural designated areas and thus would result in the loss of irrigated farmland. The acreage of specific soil types expected to be removed for road widening includes:

- ~~84~~ 56.49 acres of Prime farmlands;
- ~~91~~ 65.56 acres of farmlands of Statewide Importance;
- ~~3~~ 5.15 acres of farmlands designated Unique; and
- No Locally Important farmlands.

Thus, a total of ~~178~~ 127.20 acres of important farmland would be lost due to road widening. This loss is considered a significant impact. As a result of County road improvements, ~~105~~ 73.54 acres of irrigated farmland would be lost. The remaining ~~73~~ 53.66 acres would be lost due to the widening of state highways. In addition, road widening can result in the loss of adjacent windbreaks.

In addition to road widening, impacts to agriculture that may result from the General Plan Update include potential increases in building coverage for agricultural-related uses in Agricultural and Open Space designations, creation of substandard sized parcels for Farmworker Housing complexes in the Agricultural and Open Space designations, and the potential for constructing community sewage treatment facilities in Rural, Open Space, and Agricultural designated areas. These impacts are regarded as potentially significant, but too speculative to address at this time since none of these projects has been proposed for a specific location that would impact farmland. Thus, future

environmental analysis would be required for any discretionary permit needed to implement these projects.

In addition to the impacts of the proposed amendment to the General Plan, the existing land use designations of the General Plan would allow ministerial and discretionary development which could increase dust, reduce solar access, eliminate windbreaks, decrease beneficial organisms or natural or man-made protection against harmful biological organisms, increase incompatible land uses in proximity to agricultural land resulting in increased vandalism, pilferage, trespass or impact from chemical spraying.

Indirect Impacts

Indirect impacts arise as the economic viability of agriculture declines due to factors such as rising land costs, consumer demand, the introduction of exotic pests, and the lack of farmworker housing. Once agricultural profitability declines sufficiently, farmland owners seek to subdivide their land for conversion to other uses. Once this conversion begins, it creates additional impacts on the remaining farm operations and encourages neighboring farmland owners to subdivide their properties.

The County has little control over market prices and the impact of globalization on agricultural economics; however, the General Plan can influence some aspects of agricultural viability. The General Plan (and Zoning Ordinance) can control the introduction of conflicting land uses into agricultural areas, limit the ability to subdivide and convert farmland and, to a lesser extent, regulate the amount of congestion on farm-to-market roads and the availability of water. The General Plan *Resources Appendix* Section 1.6.3 discusses the viability of agriculture in the County in detail and the positive impact of maintaining the resources and infrastructure necessary to support agriculture. In addition, the County SOAR Ordinance serves to impede the re-designation of agricultural land to other land use designations, at least until the year 2020.

Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative and growth inducing impacts will likely result from the conversion of farmland to urban uses countywide as the increase in the number of dwelling units, population, and employment continues to 2020. As the number of homes in agricultural areas increases, the need for urban services rises. This in turn alters the character of the area and promotes growth inducement for non-agricultural uses. Growth-related impacts are largely unavoidable and are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.24 of this document.

Based on GIS queries run by the County Resource Management Agency's Graphics Division, ~~T~~there are approximately ~~5,415~~ 3,625 acres of irrigated farmland in unincorporated areas that are designated Agricultural but located in the Sphere of Influence of cities. This includes farmland classified as Prime, of Statewide Importance, and Unique. ~~895~~ 784 acres are located within areas protected by the countywide, voter-initiated SOAR (Save Open Space and Agricultural Resources) Initiative enacted in 1998. An additional ~~1,972~~ 1,877 acres of irrigated farmland are protected by virtue of being located outside of the City Urban Restriction Boundaries (CURB) of the respective cities. The countywide electorate would have to approve any effort to amend the Agricultural designations of these parcels. However, there are ~~2,548~~ 2,900 acres of irrigated farmland in unincorporated areas located within the CURB boundaries of the various cities and 746 acres of Locally Important farmland. These lands are not subject to SOAR. Thus, these lands will remain Agricultural in their designation while under the County's jurisdiction, but their inclusion within the cities' CURB boundaries and their General Plan designation within the city will eventually lead to annexation and urbanization. The loss of these ~~2,548~~ 3,646 acres would be a significant cumulative impact. However, the General Plan does not cause this loss. Rather, future annexation is an independent action initiated by the requesting city and authorized by LAFCO.

Outside of the cities' Sphere of Influence there are approximately ~~85,554~~ 84,299 acres of unincorporated irrigated farmland designated Agricultural, ~~and~~ ~~19,058~~ 27,162 acres designated Open Space, and 1,897 acres designated Rural by the County General Plan. Protected by SOAR, amendment of these land use designations requires a vote of the electorate through 2020. In addition, there are approximately ~~2,367~~ 338 acres of irrigated, unincorporated farmland and 370 acres of Locally Important farmland not located within individual cities' Spheres of Influence that are designated

~~Rural,~~ Urban, or Existing Community by the County General Plan. Although not designated agricultural, these lands are identified as Prime farmlands, Farmlands of Statewide Importance, Unique or Locally Important farmlands in the State's Important Farmland Inventory and remain at risk for development to more intensive land uses. With the exception of 18.5 acres located in Piru that is designated Existing Community and protected by SOAR. Assuming conversion of all farmland not protected by SOAR or CURB boundaries, the cumulative potential loss of farmland due to County and City development is ~~2,735~~ 4,335 acres. However, actual encroachment will depend upon market forces, agricultural viability, and the local political climate.

4.4.3 Mitigation Measures

The road widening proposed in the General Plan is a significant unavoidable impact, nevertheless, proper design of new roads can reduce the impact of road widening on farming operations. General Plan policy 1.6.2-4 requires that County road improvement planning mitigate impacts to important farmlands to the extent feasible. Design features that could reduce impacts include: over-crossings, frontage roads and extra-wide shoulders.

The General Plan contains policies and programs aimed at preservation of farmland resources. These include the Agricultural land use designation, which establishes a 40-acre minimum parcel size and mandates "Agricultural Exclusive" zoning to enhance land use compatibility and to protect farming operations, and 20 acre minimum parcel size for Open Space designated land adjacent to Agricultural designated land. In addition, policy 1.6.2-1 requires that discretionary permits remove as little important farmland as possible.

Further protection is provided by implementation of the Land Conservation Act (LCA) program (also known as the Williamson Act) and the Farmland Security Zone Act (FCZA). These contracts between the County and qualifying landowners allow farmers to maintain agricultural use of their property in exchange for preferential property tax treatment. Uses of the land are then restricted to agriculture or open space for a minimum 10-year term under LCA and a maximum 20-year term under FSZA. These programs were initiated in Ventura County in 1969. By 2003 there were 130,958 acres of land under LCA contract.

Mitigation of potential impacts is focused on minimizing the incompatibility between agricultural operations and other land uses. In 1997, the County passed a Right-to-Farm Ordinance to protect commercial agriculture from nuisance claims based on a presumptive right to farm. This ordinance prevents agricultural activities, operations, and facilities that are consistent with the Zoning Ordinance and General Plan from being deemed a "nuisance". It also mandates disclosure to users of property located near agricultural operations of the noise, odor, dust, chemicals, and smoke that may accompany such agricultural operations.

In order to mitigate the impacts of sensitive uses from farming and, in turn, the impacts to farming from conflicting uses, General Plan policy 1.6.2-6 prevents discretionary development from conflicting with adjacent agricultural land. The Agricultural Commissioner and the Ventura County Agricultural Advisory Committee (APAC) provide CEQA review and recommendations for new discretionary projects. The intent of this review is to protect agriculture from potential vandalism, trespassing, theft, etc. and to protect neighboring urban uses from pesticide drift and similar impacts. Measures used to mitigate these impacts are evaluated on a case-by-case basis and include setbacks from agricultural uses, vegetative buffers, and easements to compensate growers for modifications to their farming practices.

Each of these programs is intended to reduce the loss of agricultural resources within the unincorporated County. Where such loss is unavoidable due to new development, additional mitigation measures may be necessary. ~~The November 2004 ballot includes Measure A, a ballot measure that proposes a one quarter (0.25%) cent sales tax increase in Ventura County~~ Efforts are underway throughout the County to determine various ways to fund purchase of conservation easements by an Open Space District. ~~If passed, open space and agricultural land would be protected~~ The efforts are to help protect open space and agricultural land in perpetuity and the~~e~~is Open Space District would work to preserve and restore agricultural and natural resources throughout the ~~c~~County.

This would be accomplished primarily through both fee purchase of land and purchase of conservation easements. ~~However, the feasibility of this ballot measure is unknown until after the election~~. Various mechanisms to accomplish this, including pursuit of bond measures to create a funding source approved by County voters, are being tried.

One potential regulatory approach used by other jurisdictions to slow the conversion of farmland requires compensation for discretionary development entitlements that change the use of unincorporated farmland to urban or other non-agricultural land uses (e.g. through a Zone Change or General Plan Amendment). Compensation could be achieved through the granting of, or payment for, a farmland easement, deed restriction, or other conservation mechanism. For example, for every acre of agricultural land converted to other uses, an acre of comparable agricultural land could be protected by conservation easement within the County's General Plan area. The precise ratio of compensation would require further research and discussion; however, conservation easements generated by such a requirement could be acquired and managed by the Ventura County Agricultural Land Trust or the State Department of Conservation California Farmland Conservancy Program~~, potentially, the Ventura County Regional Open Space District~~, allowing the authority to implement this mitigation to rest with another agency.

The Ventura County General Plan contains a policy in the *El Rio/Del Norte Area Plan* that already applies this type of mitigation measure. Policy 3.2.2-6 requires that discretionary development on lands designated "Prime" or of "Statewide Importance" be evaluated for the feasibility of dedicating land, a conservation easement, or cash in-lieu fees to preserve agricultural land comparable to the land that would be permanently lost as a result of the development. Due to limited development in the El Rio/Del Norte area, to date this requirement has only been applied to one Caltrans road widening project. In some cities and counties, this type of mitigation is administered by the regional open space district or agricultural land trust to leverage the amount of farmland and open space protected.

Of the ~~2,367~~ 209 acres of unincorporated, ~~irrigated~~ Prime or Statewide Importance farmland that would theoretically be impacted by the proposed mitigation measure, ~~2,150~~ 18.5 acres are protected through 2020 by SOAR. If adopted and applied, this mitigation measure would provide protection of county agricultural resources in perpetuity. Without further study the feasibility of implementing a farmland preservation program of this nature in Ventura County is unknown. It should be noted, however, that even if enacted with a one-to-one ratio, such mitigation would not reduce the impact of farmland removal to a less than significant level.

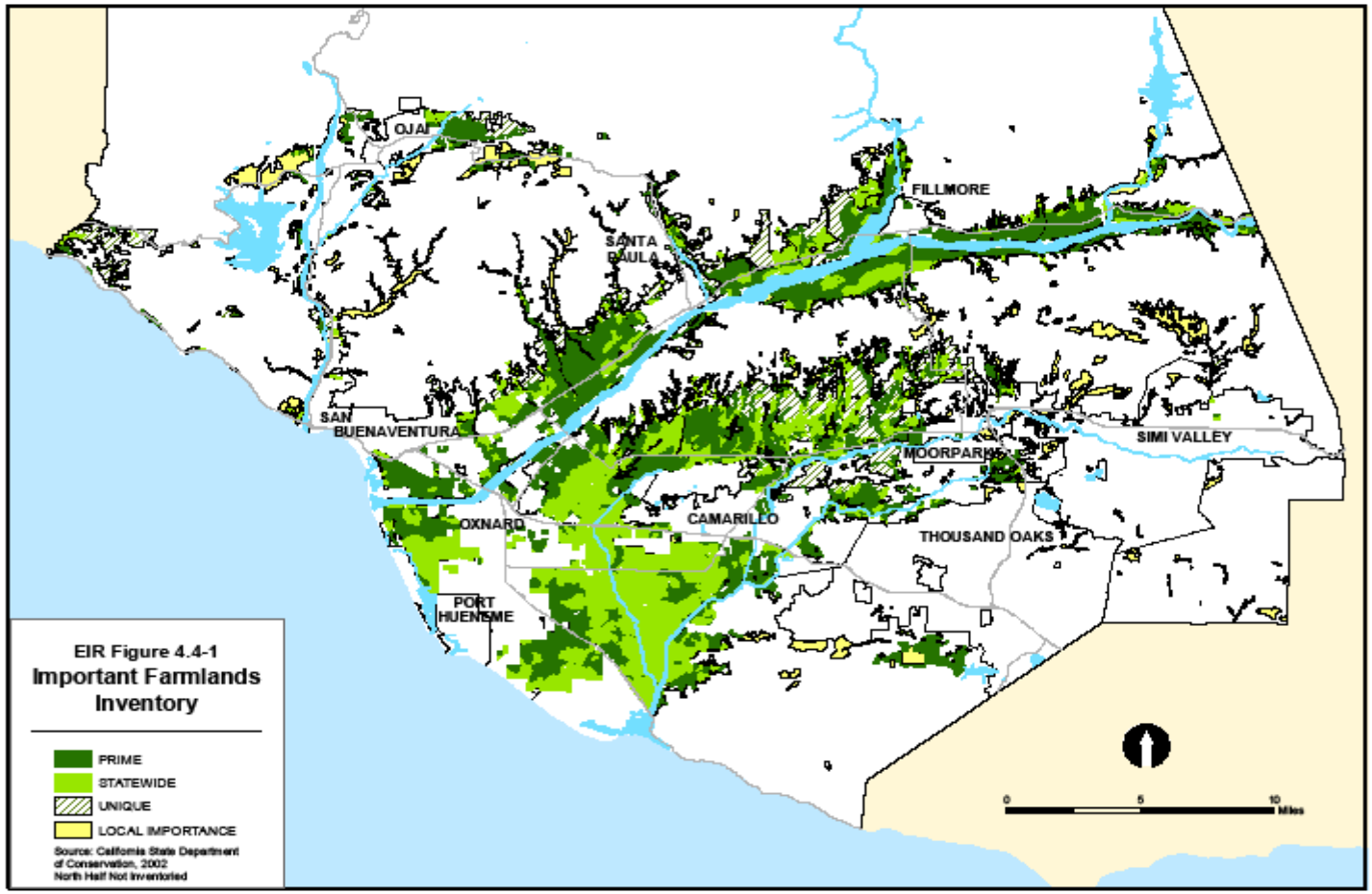
Staff notes that the most recent revisions to the Farmland Resources section of the General Plan Resources Appendix were completed in 1988. New information and comments provided by the State Department of Conservation highlight the inaccuracies inherent in the old data contained in this Appendix. Program 1.6.3-3 of the General Plan states:

> "The Planning Division will continue to work with State and Federal agencies to periodically update the Important Farmlands Inventory Map to reflect current conditions."

4.4.4 Residual Impact

The loss of ~~178~~ 127.20 acres of ~~irrigated~~ important farmland due to road widening is an unavoidable direct impact to farmland resources. The impact of future discretionary development on agricultural resources is potentially significant, but must be reviewed on a project-by-project basis, because the impact is too speculative to be addressed at this time. The secondary impacts that result in diminished agricultural economic viability will be cumulatively significant. Although the General Plan contains policies and programs that serve to partially mitigate the cumulative impact, the impact will not be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Figure 4.4-1
Important Farmlands Inventory



4.5 Scenic Resources

The Ventura County *Initial Study Assessment Guidelines* define the criteria and methodology for determining whether a proposed project may have a significant adverse impact on scenic resources. Scenic resources are defined as State and County scenic highways and scenic areas/features. A scenic highway is the area visible from a designated or eligible scenic highway, generally within one-half mile of the road. In general, scenic areas are composed of physical areas or features that are visually or aesthetically pleasing, such as the viewsheds from lakes and mountain vistas. Any project that would degrade visual resources or significantly alter or obscure public views meets the threshold for a significant impact on these resources.

4.5.1 Environmental Setting

The aesthetic character of Ventura County includes many scenic areas and natural features that are recognized as unique visual resources. Most of these are found in the varied topography, exposed rock formations, unique coastline, vegetation, lakes and waterways of the county.

Conservation of visual resources is most critical where they will be frequently viewed, such as in proximity to a highway or a residential area. From panoramic views of the Santa Monica mountains in the south to northern vistas of the Topa Topa mountain range in the Los Padres National Forest and scenic views of coastal beaches and cliffs in the west, Ventura County boasts a rare variety of accessible visual resources. The aesthetic beauty of these resources can either be enhanced by the man-made built environment or it can be degraded by it. To protect some of these visual resources, the Area Plans for Lake Sherwood, Oak Park, the Ojai Valley, and Piru recognize the mountain ridgelines in these areas as worthy of conservation. Likewise, the viewsheds of Lake Sherwood, Lake Piru, Lake Casitas, and Lake Matilija have all been designated as Scenic Resource Areas. These viewsheds include the areas around the lake and extend to the highest ridgeline surrounding each of the lakes. Figure 4.5-1 depicts the Scenic Resource Protection Overlay Zone in Ventura County, which includes the visual resources in the Ojai and Thousand Oaks areas and around the prominent lakes.

There are numerous State and County highways eligible for official designation as “scenic” through the State of California Transportation Department (CalTrans) California Scenic Highway Program. Figure 1.7.2a in the *Resources Appendix* depicts these roadways. Two additional segments of State Highway 33 in Los Padres National Forest, known as the Jacinto Reyes Scenic Byway, were designated scenic by CalTrans in 1988. Portions of the highway had been previously designated scenic in 1972. The scenic designation applies to 40 miles of Highway 33 that wind through the coastal mountain range at Pine Mountain Summit, from 6.4 miles north of State Highway 150 to the Santa Barbara County line. The scenic vistas visible from this route include pine forests, semi-desert vegetation and views of the Cuyama and Lockwood Valleys.

There are also many scenic areas in the County that are not officially recognized. Some of these are visible along minor roadways rather than from State and County highways. Others are located within cities or are already protected by the Local Coastal Plan. For a more detailed description of the County’s scenic resources, see Section 1.7 of the General Plan *Resources Appendix*.

4.5.2 Impacts

The General Plan identifies the road widening necessary to ensure that the Regional Road Network will operate at an acceptable level of service to 2020. Many of the prospective County roads to be widened are located along eligible scenic highways (e.g. segments of Highway 118, Highway 33, and Highway 34). Road widening may result in grading, the removal of vegetation, and deterioration of the rural ambience inherent to these scenic roads.

Likewise, land development within the viewshed of eligible scenic highways is a potentially significant impact. Although discretionary projects would be reviewed for impacts to visual resources, such impacts would not be prohibited outright, nor would they be protected as comprehensively as those in Scenic Resource Areas and Scenic Highway Areas. Thus, there is potential for unsightly grading of

hillsides or ridges as population growth occurs. Non-discretionary projects, such as minor grading or brush and tree removal may also generate potential visual impacts.

4.5.3 Mitigation Measures

General Plan policy 1.7.2-1 prohibits discretionary development that would significantly degrade scenic resources or obscure public vistas unless there are no feasible mitigation measures and a finding of overriding considerations in made by the decision-making body. This policy has been applied to the design of wireless antenna by requiring that they be designed to be "stealth" or nearly invisible to minimize their impact when visible from residential neighborhoods or scenic corridors. This has led to the introduction of rocks, pine trees and other innovative wireless antenna coverings that blend with the natural environment.

The Scenic Resource Areas and the Scenic Highway Areas designations and the SRP and SHP overlay zones are designed to preserve, protect and enhance the County's scenic resources through the regulation of uses that might adversely affect these visual resources. Included in the General Plan *Goals, Policies, and Programs* are a variety of policies that protect Scenic Resource Areas and Scenic Highway Areas through limits on outdoor advertising, attention to the design of nearby structures, tree preservation measures, and grading restrictions. However, these policies do not apply to unique natural features, eligible scenic highways, or other scenic resources not specifically identified as a Scenic Resource Area or Scenic Highway Area.

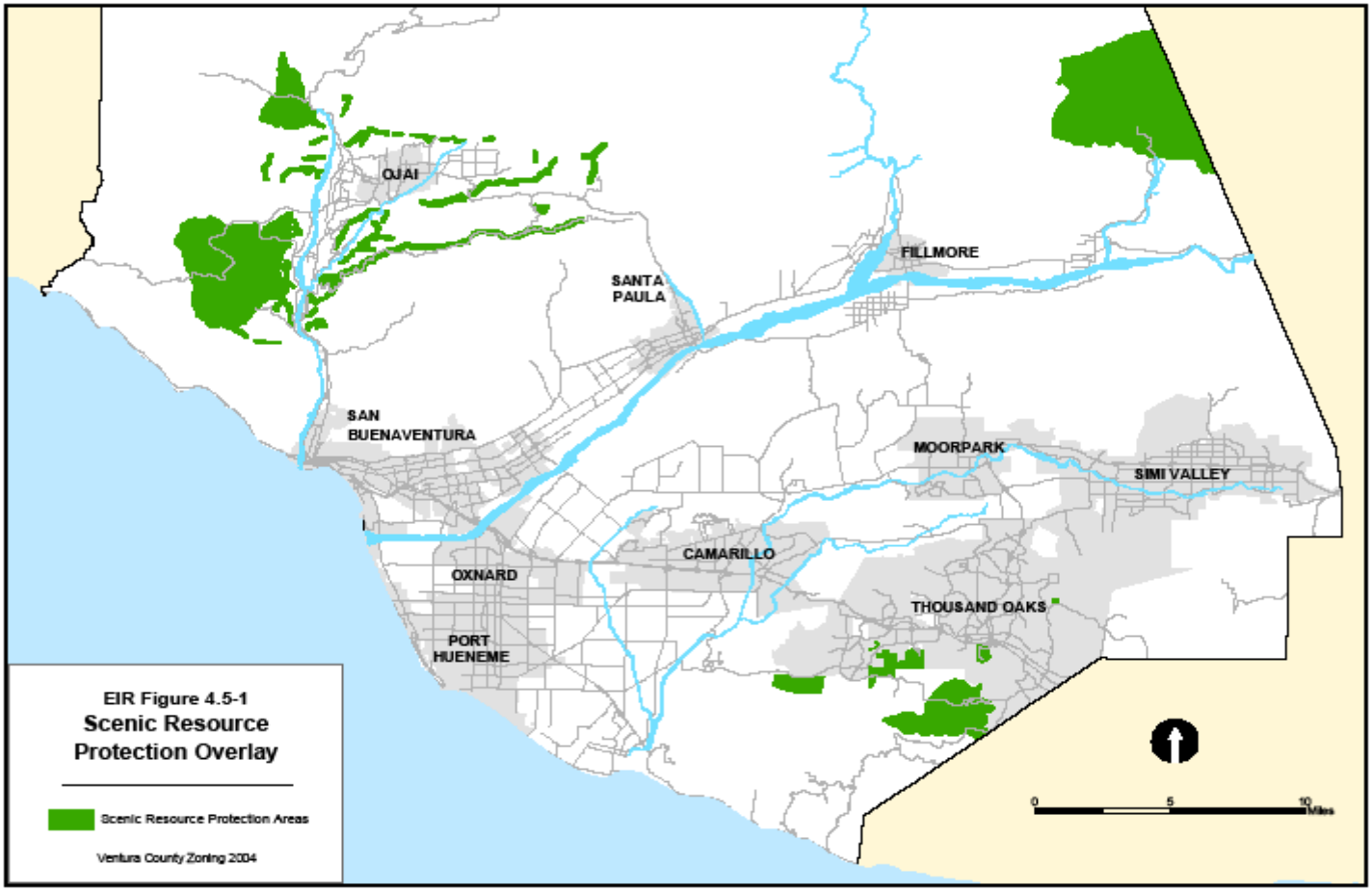
Thus, the impact of future discretionary development on scenic resources within the County is potentially significant. The views from scenic vistas and highways that are not included on the Scenic Resource Protection Overlay or in a Scenic Highway Area or similarly protected by an Area Plan could be obstructed or degraded by new development. Though these impacts will be reviewed on a project-by-project basis, there is no mechanism in place to preserve undesignated scenic resources.

Impacts along eligible scenic highways could be mitigated to a less-than-significant level by completion of a more detailed visual assessment and subsequent adoption of the official Scenic Highway Area designation where appropriate. This would require designing and funding a scenic corridor protection program for each of the eligible highways. However, this mitigation measure does not appear financially feasible given current budget constraints of the County.

4.5.4 Residual Impact

The direct impact of future discretionary development on scenic resources is potentially significant, but too speculative to be addressed at this time. The cumulative deterioration of scenic resources due to population growth, road widening, and incremental development to 2020 is immitigable without funding to apply the Scenic Resources Area designation to undesignated scenic features or Scenic Highway Area designation to eligible scenic highways.

Figure 4.5-1
Scenic Resource Protection Overlay



4.6 Paleontological Resources

Paleontological resources refer to the fossilized remains of plant and animal life. In Ventura County, paleontological remains include examples from throughout most of geological history, including the Paleozoic (600-225 million years ago), the Mesozoic (225-70 million years ago), and the Cenozoic (70 million years ago to the present). Careful scientific study of fossilized life forms preserved in the sedimentary and metamorphic rocks of the Ventura County region can result in the identification of local paleo-environmental conditions and biological evolutionary trends. In addition, certain fossil remains are only found in isolated outcrops in Ventura County and are therefore of unique scientific interest.

A glossary of paleontological terminology can be found in the Ventura County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines and Section 1.8.1 of the *Resources Appendix* of the General Plan.

The geologic formation in which proposed projects would be located can be used to establish the likelihood of paleontological resources being present and their relative importance. Fossil remains are considered important if they are: 1) well preserved; 2) identifiable; 3) type/topotypic specimens; 4) age diagnostic; 5) useful in environmental reconstruction; 6) represent rare and/or endemic taxa; 7) represent a diverse assemblage; and/or 8) represent associated marine and non-marine taxa. Vertebrate and Megainvertebrate fossils are considered highly important because they are comparatively rare and allow precise age determinations and environmental reconstructions for the strata in which they occur. Microinvertebrate fossils (microfossils) are much more abundant and, for this reason and because of their small size, would not be adversely impacted to the same degree as vertebrate and megainvertebrate fossils.

Direct impacts to fossil sites include grading and excavation of fossiliferous rock, which can result in the loss of scientifically important fossil specimens and associated geological data. Indirect impacts include increased opportunities for access to, and unauthorized collection of, fossil materials. Cumulative impacts include all projects which contribute to the progressive loss of exposed rock in Ventura County that can be studied and prospected for fossil remains. Significance, except for formations listed as "Low" or "None", must be determined by a qualified paleontological consultant.

4.6.1 Environmental Setting

Ventura County contains a variety of significant paleontological resources. Paleontological resources include plant and animal fossils spanning millions of years of evolutionary development.

Paleontological resources are present in many of the geologic formations in Ventura County. The region as a whole is part of the Transverse Range, an east-west trending Tertiary (70-1 million years ago) sedimentary mountain corridor. In the County's south half, the Ventura Basin is characterized by enormously thick (averaging 18,000 feet) Pliocene-Pleistocene (10 million years ago - present) deposits with abundant fossilized Foraminifera (unicellular calcareous microorganisms). The intensely folded and faulted North Half includes significant older Mesozoic (225 - 70 million years ago) fossils that outcrop in a variety of locations.

A more complete description of paleontological resources can be found in Section 1.8 of the Ventura County General Plan *Resources Appendix*.

4.6.2 Impacts

Potential impacts to paleontological resources include direct and indirect impacts, as well as cumulative impacts and project impacts from discretionary and non-discretionary development. Growth and development levels allowed by the General Plan will have a variety of impacts on paleontological resources.

A primary impact from development is the possibility of direct destruction of paleontological sites from construction and grading activities. Any new area opened to development or agriculture has the potential for alteration or destruction of sites or paleontological deposits.

With greater population density and a more developed transportation infrastructure, indirect impacts to paleontological resources could result from greater public access to these resources. The ramifications of greater public access are increased looting and vandalism of these resources on the one hand, and increased public awareness and appreciation of these resources on the other. Paleontological resources are by nature nonrenewable and are, therefore, highly sensitive to impacts from greater public access. Paleontological resources face unique impacts due to their potential for economic exploitation. Certain fossilized formations are useful to industry and may face greater exploitation with increased development in the County.

Non-discretionary development can result in significant impacts to paleontological resources. Non-discretionary activities, such as farming, minor grading and construction of single-family homes and second dwelling units on existing lots can destroy resources accidentally or deliberately, as the County does not exercise control over these activities. Cumulative impacts from population growth Countywide, adding an additional 170,457 people by the year 2020 will have a variety of results, depending on the nature of the resource. This gross increase in population could result in increased looting, vandalism and accidental destruction of paleontological resources from increased public access and non-discretionary development. These impacts would be significant, but largely unavoidable.

Paleontological resources, particularly those that are of economic value, may face cumulative impacts. Cumulative impacts from looting of fossil sites have the potential to diminish our understanding of local floral and faunal evolutionary trends.

4.6.3 Mitigation Measures

Mitigation of significant impacts to paleontological resources is set forth in Section 1.8 of the *Goals, Policies, and Programs* of the Ventura County General Plan. If an impact is unavoidable, the importance of a resource is determined on a case-by-case basis according to established *Initial Study Assessment Guidelines*. Mitigation of potential adverse impacts to significant resources depends on identification and inventory of the subject resources.

Specific mitigation measures that are stated as policies include requirements that all discretionary developments be assessed for potential paleontological resources impacts, and that such data be incorporated into a countywide data base (General Plan *Goals, Policies and* Programs policy 1.8.2-1). In addition, design of discretionary developments must be altered to avoid direct impact on resource sites wherever possible. When such impacts are unavoidable, extraction of recoverable data is required (General Plan *Goals, Policies and* Programs policy 1.8.2-2). These policies serve to reduce the impacts of discretionary development to less-than-significant level.

Development and population growth will, over time, have significant impacts to the paleontological resources due to indirect impacts of cumulative development and direct impacts from non-discretionary development. No feasible mitigation measures for impacts from non-discretionary activities or indirect impacts have been identified.

4.6.4 Residual Impact

The impact of future discretionary development on paleontological resources is potentially significant, but must be reviewed on a project-by-project basis because the impact is too speculative to be addressed at this time. Imposing General Plan policies on future discretionary development can reduce the potential direct impacts on paleontological resources to a less-than-significant level.

The direct impact of ministerial development and indirect impact of cumulative development cannot be feasibly mitigated.

4.7 Cultural Resources

Cultural Resources consist of:

Archaeological resources are the material remains (artifacts, structures, refuse, etc.) produced purposely or accidentally by members of prehistoric human cultures.

Historical resources include the following:

1. A resource listed in, or determined to be eligible by the State Historical Resources Commission, for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (Pub. Res. Code SS5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4850 et. seq.).
2. A resource included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in Section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code or identified as significant in an historical resource survey meeting the requirements, Section 5024.1(g) of the Public Resources Code.
3. Any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California may be considered to be an historical resource.

Ethnic/Social Resources are unique material/organizational expressions of ethnic and group values, particularly those relating to Native Americans, Hispanic, Black and Oriental ethnic groups, but can also be expanded to include other ethnic groups.

Religious Resources are places of worship, areas of activity, shrines, features of religious devotion, or areas of procurement for religious articles that maintain religious values.

Technical terms for archaeological resources, historic resources and ethnic/social and religious resources can be found in the Ventura County *Initial Study Assessment Guidelines*.

For archaeological resources, CEQA requires protection of unique archaeological resources that may be damaged or destroyed by a discretionary development project. For the purposes of CEQA, a unique archaeological resource is an archaeological artifact, object, or site about which it can be clearly demonstrated that, without merely adding to the current body of knowledge, there is a high probability that it meets any of the following criteria:

1. Contains information needed to answer important scientific research question and that there is a demonstrable public interest in that information.
2. Has a special and particular quality such as oldest of its type or best available example of its type.
3. Is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person.

For historic resources, a project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment. The significance of an historic resource is materially impaired when a project:

1. Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its inclusion in, or eligibility for, inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources; or
2. Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics that account for its inclusion in a local register of historical resources pursuant to Section 5020.1(k) requirements of Section 5024.1(g) of the Public Resources Code, unless the public agency reviewing the effects of the project establishes by a preponderance of evidence that the resource is not historically or culturally significant; or

3. Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of a historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its eligibility for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources as determined by a lead agency for purposes of CEQA.

For ethnic/social or religious resources, definitive, quantitative methods cannot be used to measure or determine significance of impacts to these resources, therefore, impacts and their significance must be evaluated and determined on a case-by-case basis.

4.7.1 Environmental Setting

Ventura County contains a variety of significant cultural resources. Cultural resources include an archaeological record encompassing at least 8,000 years of prehistoric settlement, the rich Native American heritage of the Chumash people, and over two hundred years of history influenced by Spanish, Mexican, Anglo-American, and many other immigrants to Ventura County.

Archaeological resources in Ventura County include sites and material remains consistent with the regional culture area, which includes Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties. Early Period (ca. 8,000 B. C. - 1,200 B. C.) cultural remains include evidence of hunter-gatherer subsistence techniques utilization of land and marine resources, and gradual population growth and greater socio-cultural development. Middle Period (1,200 B. C. - 1,100 A. D.) archaeological material reflects increasing sophistication in the exploitation of ocean resources, including the use of ocean-going vessels. The inland regions were populated during this period, and stable trading and ceremonial exchange patterns developed between the highly populated coastal villages and the inland peoples. Late Period (1,100 A. D. - Historic Chumash) developments indicate increasing cultural sophistication of the prehistoric populations. Highly developed craftsmanship was evident, particularly in the manufacture of basketry, stonework, beadwork, and seagoing craft and associated technology. Chumash social and religious development was highly evolved, and large populations were supported by abundant and varied local natural resources.

Historical resources in Ventura County include remains of the Spanish colonial empire, which, beginning in 1782, established the Mission system among the estimated 2,500 to 4,200 Ventureno Chumash, and by the later Spanish and Mexican ranchos, which brought the hacienda system of economic organization to the Ventura County area. Anglo-Americans slowly displaced the original Spanish and Mexican rancho title-holders, and by the 1870s had largely emerged as the dominant economic class. The 1870s saw the establishment of many local towns, while the laying of rail lines and the development of an oil extraction economy pushed development into many corners of the County. The oil boom of the 1920s and increasing development in the public and private economies during and after the 1930s contributed to much of the urban and rural infrastructure (roads, dams, farmlands, oilfields, etc.) characteristic of Ventura County today. County historical resources include examples of architecture from the various periods noted above, including Spanish Colonial, Mexican Rancho, Victorian and Revival, California Bungalow and Ranch, etc.

Native American resources overlap the archaeological and historical resources noted above. The Ventureno Chumash were linguistically distinct from their Chumash neighbors. The patrilineal Chumash lived in villages, called *rancherias* by the Spanish. They were considered industrious and civilized, and after the introduction of the Mission System in the 1780s, their labor helped establish the Ventura region as a prime agricultural area. Following the break-up of the Mission System, most of the Chumash who had not been decimated by epidemics or by the, sometimes, harsh labor imposed by the Mission system, became assimilated into the Rancho system of debt peonage. Although some Chumash held on to their old beliefs and ethnic identify, by the 1960s, many casual observers had concluded that the Chumash were extinct as a people. However, more recently Chumash descendants have been experiencing a cultural rebirth and the several thousand people in the Tri-County region who can claim Chumash descent have been working on re-establishing their cultural heritage. Several Chumash heritage groups are active in Ventura County today.

A more complete description of cultural resources, including County archaeological, historical, and Native American resources, can be found in Section 1.8 of the Ventura County General Plan *Resources Appendix*.

4.7.2 Impacts

Potential impacts to cultural resources, as is the case with paleontological resources, include direct and indirect impacts of unincorporated and cumulative development. Growth and development levels allowed by the General Plan will have a variety of impacts on cultural resources.

A primary impact from development is the possibility of direct destruction of archaeological and historical sites from construction and grading activities. Any new area opened to development or agriculture has the potential for alteration or destruction of sites, artifacts, or historic structures and districts. It is important to understand that, per the CEQA Guidelines, just because a potential historic site is not documented, does not mean that it is not an important resource. Most of the 1,500 square miles of the County have not yet been surveyed.

With greater population density and a more developed transportation infrastructure, indirect impacts to archaeological resources from greater public access can result. The ramifications of greater public access are: increased looting and vandalism of these resources on the one hand, and increased public awareness and appreciation of these resources on the other. Archaeological and historical resources are by nature nonrenewable and are, therefore, highly sensitive to impacts from greater public access.

Non-discretionary development can, also, result in significant impacts to cultural resources. Non-discretionary activities, such as farming, minor grading and construction of single-family homes and second dwelling units on existing lots can destroy resources accidentally or deliberately, because the County does not exercise control over these activities. Historic structures, even designated County landmarks, can be destroyed by non-discretionary development. The County Historic Landmark designation provides scant protection, as it merely requires the property owners to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness, or approval prior to proceeding. However, even if denied, the owner is only stayed for six months during which time the County can try to negotiate a better solution with the owner. Failing this, the owner may proceed after six months.

Cumulative impacts from population growth Countywide, adding an additional 170,457 people by the year 2020, will have a variety of results, depending on the nature of the resource. This gross increase in population will inevitably result in the potential for increased looting, vandalism and accidental destruction of cultural resources from increased public access and non-discretionary development. These impacts are significant, and largely unavoidable.

Cumulative impacts to archaeological sites include increasing destruction of habitation and special use sites, particularly in those areas outside the Los Padres National Forest boundaries. Coastal archaeological sites, already severely impacted, may completely disappear with greater development of coastal sites for residential, industrial, and tourist uses. Sites in the National Forest lands and in other Open Space areas face cumulative impacts from greater off-road vehicle use and other inappropriate land use activities resulting from increased population pressure from the urbanized south half of the County and from growing neighboring counties. Effects of these cumulative impacts include a continual degradation of our limited resource inventory and permanent preclusion of our ability to further understand our past cultural development.

Cumulative impacts to historical structures and districts, aside from the obvious destruction of individual resources, include degradation by the introduction of inappropriate and unrelated structures that are not compatible with the existing historic fabric of neighboring structures and districts. Loss of historic resources and intact historic districts may have far-reaching psychological and societal impacts. A sense of historical place and “roots” may be lost with the destruction of these resources. The indirect and incremental impacts of the degradation of these resources must be taken into account along with the more obvious impacts to individual sites and locations.

As stated in the introduction to this section, impacts to ethnic/social or religious resources and their significance must be evaluated and determined on a case-by-case basis.

4.7.3 Mitigation Measures

Mitigation of significant impacts to cultural resources is set forth-in Section 1.8 of the *Goals, Policies, and Programs* of the Ventura County General Plan. Mitigation measures respecting archaeological and historical impacts must follow CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064.5, "Determining the Significance of Impacts on Historical and Unique Archaeological Resources." Additionally, the County's *Initial Study Assessment Guidelines* have been updated to be consistent with CEQA.

Specific mitigation measures that are stated as policies include requirements that all discretionary developments be assessed for potential archaeological resource impacts, and that such data be incorporated into a countywide data base (policy 1.8.2-1). In addition, design of discretionary developments must be altered to avoid direct impact on resource sites wherever possible. When such impacts are unavoidable, further mitigation measures must be sought to reduce such impacts to a less-than-significant level extraction of recoverable data is required (policy 1.8.2-2). These policies serve to reduce the impacts of discretionary development to less-than-significant level.

Specific mitigation measures must follow CEQA, State Office of Historic Preservation and Native American Heritage Commission Guidelines and must respect national, State, and local statutes regarding confidentiality of site records and locations. These safeguards can help mitigate potential impacts generated from increased accessibility to the resource sites. When potentially significant and known archaeological and historical sites and structures are identified, this information is transmitted to the Ventura County Cultural Heritage Board for evaluation of the impacts and possible nomination to the County Cultural Heritage sites inventory, and for potential nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Impacts to historic structures resulting from renovation efforts can be further mitigated by a policy of allowing use of the State Historic Building Code for private projects and requiring it in other circumstances. Additionally, the County Cultural Heritage Ordinance requires that potential, and undesignated, Cultural Heritage sites be reviewed by the Cultural Heritage Board, and that designated sites receive a Certificate of Appropriateness before proceeding. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties are employed to evaluate and mitigate projects.

In December, 2000, the Board of Supervisors adopted General Plan, Zoning Ordinance and Cultural Heritage Ordinance amendments. Strict adherence to these statutes and to the mitigation measures noted above will help mitigate the adverse impacts associated with existing land use plans to a low to moderate level. Nonetheless, development and population growth will, over time, have significant impacts to the cultural resources due to indirect impacts of cumulative development and direct impacts from non-discretionary development. No feasible mitigation measures for impacts from non-discretionary activities or indirect impacts have been identified.

4.7.4 Residual Impact

The potential impact of future discretionary development allowed by the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance on cultural resources is potentially significant, but must be reviewed on a project-by project basis because the impact is too speculative to be addressed at this time. Imposing General Plan policies and Zoning Ordinance standards on future discretionary development can substantially reduce the potential significant impacts on cultural resources to a less-than-significant level.

The direct impact of ministerial development and indirect impact of cumulative development cannot be feasibly mitigated.

4.8 Coastal Beaches and Sand Dunes

Coastal Beaches are an expanse of sand or pebbles along a seashore which has value as a recreation resource and, along with coastal dunes, form a protective buffer from the processes of storm and wave erosion, and provide habitat for a wide variety of unique plants and animals.

Coastal Sand Dunes are formed in areas where local erosion, wind and topographic features have caused sand to accumulate in a series of low hills. Coastal dunes are generally divided into (a) foredunes, small hillocks directly facing the ocean, and (b) backdunes, usually several series of hills that are higher and more continuously vegetated than the foredunes.

Chapter 1.10 of the General Plan *Goals, Policies and Programs*, and Chapter 1.10 of its *Resources Appendix*, and the County's Local Coastal Program (Area Plan and Ordinance) contain goals and policies regarding coastal beaches and sand dunes. These goals and policies are used to determine whether or not a project could have a significant impact. A project's impact on these resources could be direct (physical removal or modification) or indirect (barriers to sand replenishment or disturbance of dune vegetation).

4.8.1 Environmental Setting

Ventura County has 42 miles of coastline, which contains many areas of coastal beaches and sand dunes.

Sandy beaches are nourished largely by the weathering of coastal bluffs and dunes, and by riverine transport of material to the sea. Ventura County has three major sources of beach sand: the Santa Clara River (contributing 60%), the other rivers and streams (10%), and beaches up-coast of the Ventura River (30%). The total volume of sand contributed by these sources is estimated to vary from 200,000 to 1,700,000 cubic yards or 1,000,000 cubic yard average per year (Ventura County Flood Control District, 1979). This sand becomes part of the Santa Barbara littoral cell in which the north to south littoral drift terminates in the Mugu and Hueneme submarine canyons.

A littoral cell is a section of shoreline where the flow of sand begins at a major sediment source and terminates at a major sediment sink, such as a submarine canyon. In Ventura County, waves moving in the direction of prevailing westerly to northwesterly winds generally meet the beaches at a slight angle because of the shoreline's orientation from northwest to southeast. The resultant effect is a net movement of sand over time from northwest to southeast along the beaches.

The maintenance of sandy beaches is critical because beaches serve as natural buffers between wave action and easily eroded uplands. Sandy beaches tend to dissipate wave energy, yet incur very little damage. Naturally occurring buffer zones (such as coastal sand dunes) are generally much more effective at reducing wave damage and protecting the coastline than are man-made protective devices (former California Department of Navigation and Ocean Development, 1979).

Loss of recreation and private beaches has occurred along the North Coast of the County with attendant loss of surfing areas as well. Loss of beach homes from storm damage has occurred in areas of beach depletion. Countywide, beaches are eroding at the rate of 0.7 feet per year (Army Corps of Engineers, *Ventura County Survey Report for Beach Erosion Control*, May 1980).

Sand dunes constitute another important coastal resource. Major sand dune communities are found in the McGrath-Mandalay area, at Ormond Beach, in the vicinity of Point Mugu, and near the mouths of the Santa Clara and Ventura Rivers.

Generally, sand dunes form as windblown sand collects on an object of obstruction. Coastal sand dunes are extremely fragile, yet highly protective. They inhibit beach erosion and form a protective buffer from both wind and wave action for areas and resources, both natural and man-made, immediately inland. They also protect coastal salt marshes and wetlands. Coastal dunes also have biological significance. In this County, they provide nesting habitat for the snowy plover, the California least tern (an endangered species), and a number of other shore birds. They also support a variety of coastal plant species, including the sand verbena, the sea rocket, the sea fig, and others. Vegetation

is particularly important to the maintenance of the dunes, insofar as it serves to stabilize the dunes and promote dune formation.

Coastal dune formations are dynamic in nature, migrating and reforming, depending on wind and wave patterns and coastal topography. The built environment in the vicinity of dunes is therefore, often subject to sand encroachment, which results in increased costs for street sweeping and sand removal.

The ecological as well as protective characteristics of dune communities can be easily altered by human activities, especially development and off-road vehicle use. Additionally, unrestricted pedestrian access may, on a cumulative basis, result in the trampling and loss of dune vegetation and ultimately in the degradation of the community and loss of the dune.

For a discussion of coastal wave and beach erosion hazards, refer to Section 2.11 of the *Hazards Appendix* to the General Plan.

For sand and beach protection, Ventura County is a participant in BEACON (Beach Erosion Authority for Control Operations), a joint-powers organization created to fight beach erosion within Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties. The County's liaison to this organization is in the County Public Works Agency, Watershed Protection District.

The Coastal Area Plan describes three distinct areas along the coast, which are summarized in the following sections

North Coast

The North Coast spans 12 miles from the northern County line at Rincon Point southward to the Ventura River. It encompasses coastal cliffs, formed by eroding marine terraces, a portion of the Santa Inez Mountains, narrow sandy beaches, rocky tide-pools, and a perennial stream. In addition, there are six residential and two industrial "Existing Communities," which encompass the existing and planned urban development along the coast.

Portions of the North Coast are set aside for recreation. Emma Wood State Beach, about seven miles south of the Solimar Beach Existing Community, has 150 overnight campsites. The North Coast also includes the popular surfing area at Rincon Point. Hobson County Park, Faria County Park, and the Rincon Parkway have additional opportunities for camping and beach access.

Over 70 percent of the shoreline (8.6 miles) is now owned and controlled by either the State (8.3 miles) or the County (0.3 miles).

The North Coast beaches are highly vulnerable to erosion and wave damage. Dredging operations in Santa Barbara Harbor alter sand transport down coast. Without adequate replacement sand, high tides and waves erode the beaches. Beachside designated "Existing Communities" are losing beachfront during these times, and seawalls are being undermined, critically endangering residences. Affected areas are:

- Mussel Shoals
- Seacliff
- Hobson County Park
- Faria Beach Park
- Faria Beach Colony
- Solimar Beach Colony
- Old Coast Highway
- Emma Wood State Beach

Central Coast

The Central Coast portion of the shoreline is the sandy edge of the extensive Oxnard Plain. The cities of San Buenaventura, Oxnard and Port Hueneme and two unincorporated urban residential

communities share 16.5 miles of coast with agriculture, sand dune, fresh and saltwater marsh ecosystems, power plants at Mandalay and Ormond Beach, wastewater treatment plants, harbors, and a variety of heavy industry and oil operations.

Just south of the Santa Clara River, on the beach side of Harbor Boulevard, is McGrath State Park, which includes McGrath Lake and is within the City of Oxnard. Inland from McGrath Lake and Mandalay State Beach, are approximately 1,400 acres of unincorporated land used for agriculture and/or oil production. Edison Canal, which runs through this agricultural land, supplies water to the Reliant Energy (formerly Southern California Edison) Mandalay generating facility, which is located south of McGrath State Park and is also within the City of Oxnard.

In the vicinity of Oxnard and Port Hueneme are two unincorporated Existing Communities (Hollywood Beach and Silverstrand), which are separated by the county-owned Channel Islands Harbor. Just south and east of Silverstrand is the City of Port Hueneme, including the Navy's Construction Battalion (CB) Base ~~including~~ and the Pt. Hueneme Harbor. Further south is the Ormond Beach area, most of which is within the City of Oxnard and includes the Ormond Beach electrical generating facility.

Remnants of the once-extensive Mandalay coastal dune complex are scattered throughout the Central Coast. Viable dunes within the County's jurisdiction are found near McGrath Lake. Dunes surround the lake, effectively sheltering the rare freshwater habitat from wind and erosion. The lake is used by numerous water birds, and the area supports a variety of other coastal species. Approximately 80 acres of dunes are within the unincorporated area, while the rest of the dune complex falls within the City of Oxnard's jurisdiction. The active West Montalvo oil field extends, in part, beneath these dunes, including oil wells and a Chevron Oil Company processing plant. Additionally, there are remnant smaller dunes in the Ormand Beach area, between the Naval Base Ventura County and the Port of Hueneme harbor. Plus there are small dunes that provide nesting areas for snowy plovers and other wildlife habitat northwest of Ormand Beach between the wetland and the surf. These small dunes are subject to damage from El Nino type winter storms.

The unincorporated dune area seaward of Harbor Boulevard is designated "Open Space" in the Coastal Area Plan. Landward of Harbor Boulevard, the dune area is designated "Agriculture".

Unincorporated areas of the Central Coast with beaches include Hollywood Beach and Silver Strand. According to the former California Department of Navigation and Ocean Development (DNOD, 1979), erosion at Hollywood Beach is minimal because of the jetty at the north entrance of Channel Islands Harbor.

Erosion at Silver Strand is also slight. While the middle section of the beach is subject to erosion during periods of high tides and wave action, homes on the shoreline are protected from damage by bulldozed sand dikes.

Beach sections that become eroded are currently stabilized with sand replenishment by the Army Corps of Engineers as requested by the Ventura County Flood Control District as funds are available.

South Coast

The South Coast portion of the County's shoreline is comprised of about 18,600 acres of some of the most striking and diverse coastal terrain in the County. Included along its 13.1-mile length (only eight miles are under State or local jurisdiction) are Mugu Lagoon and surrounding coastal marches, and approximately seven miles of the coastal Santa Monica Mountains. The sub-area's northern boundary is the Naval Base Ventura County (formerly known as the Point Mugu Pacific Missile Test Center), with the Los Angeles County line as the sub-area's southern end point.

Most of the federally owned land in the County coastal zone is located in the South Coast; however, it is excluded from Coastal Commission or County jurisdiction. The Naval Base Ventura County (formerly the U.S. Navy Pacific Missile Test Center at Point Mugu) is adjacent to Oxnard at Arnold Road. Mugu Lagoon, one of the largest and most important estuaries and tidal marshes in California, is within base boundaries.

Mugu Lagoon is the last Southern California estuary to remain in its approximate natural site. Numerous biological research programs indicate its importance. A number of species found in the

Lagoon have been exterminated in other estuaries. The Lagoon serves as a nursery for offshore species. A variety of marine mammals feed and rest within the Lagoon.

South of the property under the jurisdiction of Naval Base Ventura County is Point Mugu State Park, which contains La Jolla Beach. La Jolla Beach contains 40 acres of sandy beach and dunes with a prominent climbing, wind-formed dune.

A small urban residential community area, called Solromar, is located immediately north of the Ventura - Los Angeles County line along a narrow coastal terrace. The Solromar area is designated "Existing Community" in the General Plan, allowing it to be developed to prevailing zoning.

Major creek corridors on the South Coast include Calleguas Creek, La Jolla Canyon, Big Sycamore Canyon, Serrano Canyon, Deer Creek Canyon and Little Sycamore Canyon.

The Calleguas Creek watershed includes over 343 square miles, including the major urbanized areas of Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks, Moorpark and Camarillo, and as well, major agricultural lands in the Oxnard Plain. A portion (approximately 400-500 feet) within the Coastal zone of Calleguas Creek drains into Mugu Lagoon. Rapid urbanization and increased agricultural irrigation has resulted in increased runoff and sedimentation in Mugu Lagoon.

The riparian corridors in the Santa Monica Mountains (Big Sycamore, Serrano, Deer Creek, and Little Sycamore) are important watershed areas. Maintenance of their compliment of native vegetation help diffuse floods and runoff, minimize soil erosion, and diminish sedimentation.

A significant portion of the Santa Monica Mountains is within Ventura County's coastal zone, which extends up to five miles inland in this sub-area. While much of the area is undeveloped, there are two segments that are subdivided into one to 10 acre “ranchettes”; one at Deals Flat and another along branches of the Deals Flat access road. The Coastal Area Plan allows one dwelling per 10+ acres, subject to the South Coast Hazards Section Policy 7 (slope/density formula).

Beach erosion on the South Coast occurs at Point Mugu State park along Sycamore Beach and the Beaches in the Solromar "Existing Community" area. Major erosion occurs during the winter months. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers indicates a 1.9-foot per year erosion rate for Sycamore Beach, and a 0.9-foot per year erosion rate for Solromar Beach. The problem is severe in these areas.

4.8.2 Impacts

Coastal wave hazards can exist at shorelines as a result of the strong and damaging wave actions that can occur during storms. Damage to properties can result from high wave run-up, wave splashes and flying debris tossed by waves breaking at the beach or on coastal structures. The County Coastline Wave Hazard Areas are identified in the Flood Insurance Rate Map for Ventura County (unincorporated areas). The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) defines these areas as “V” zones.

Numerous residences are located adjacent to the beach erosion and wave hazard areas identified by the "V" zones, and may be in danger of being destroyed or damaged as a result of being undermined by erosion or from wave and flooding damage. Most of these residences are located in the communities of Rincon, Mussel Shoals (Punta Gorda), Seacliff, Faria, Solimar and Solromar. Five parks in the Ventura County unincorporated area (Hobson County Park, Faria County Park, Emma Wood Beach Park, Point Mugu State Park and Leo Carillo State Park) also lie within or adjacent to the Coastal Wave Hazard Area.

The erosion of coastal beaches is a very complex problem. The beach is in a perpetual state of dynamic disequilibrium, adjusting to changes in waves, currents, tides and sediment deposition. The force that moves sand along the shoreline, creating the phenomenon known as the "littoral drift", is provided by waves breaking at an angle along the beaches. The sand found on Ventura County beaches travels with the littoral drift from the northwest to southeast.

Man-made shoreline alteration can have severe effects on this natural process and must be closely monitored. Shortsighted solutions may aggravate erosion problems and pose secondary erosion

impacts. Effective beach erosion management, therefore, requires a comprehensive understanding of the erosion process and technically oriented, long-term management plans.

In addition to the littoral drift, there is an onshore-offshore movement of sand. Waves that are small or spaced far apart tend to move sand from the ocean bottom towards the beach, building it out. Large, closely spaced waves tend to cut back the beach and move the eroded sand seaward, forming sand bars in shallow water.

All beaches in Ventura County are subject to erosion to a certain degree. Even beaches stabilized by groins can erode, although they do so at a slower pace. Erosion will increase in the future at all beaches if sand supplies to the coast are decreased.

Portions of the County coastline are in the Beach Erosion Hazard Area. In the County unincorporated beaches, the Beach Erosion Hazard Areas are generally located at Rincon Point, Punta Gorda, Seacliff Colony, Pitas Point and Faria Colony, Solimar Beach, Bass Rock, and Solromar. Portions of Naval Base Ventura County are also within the Hazard Area.

Individual and cumulatively development throughout the County could have impacts on the beaches and dune formation. Changes in water flow and material deposition could be affected by certain development patterns and mineral resource limitations. All major watersheds in the South half of the County inevitably flow to the Pacific Ocean. Urbanized development, generally, leads to more impervious surfaces, which may have some impact on sand replenishment material being deprived from the watercourses that result in its deposit upon the County's beaches. Conversely, an increase of impervious surfaces could alter water flow patterns such that the major watersheds may have an increase in water volumes, thus forcing more material downstream.

The majority of development occurs in the incorporated cities within the County. Control of development in these communities is beyond the jurisdictional authority of the County. Urban types of development that occur within the unincorporated areas of Ventura County that are subject to discretionary review are regulated and subject to individual environmental review. Ministerial development that is allowed throughout the County in the unincorporated areas may result in a potentially significant cumulative impact upon sand replenishment, but that development is so incremental in nature that it is beyond the scope of this EIR to quantify.

The majority of development activities that would directly result in the deprivation of beach replacement sand would be from in river sand and gravel mining. The County currently has stringent policies and regulatory mechanisms in place to evaluate and mitigate the impacts from these activities through discretionary development controls.

The phenomenon of beach erosion is dealt with in Sections 1.10 and 2.12 of the *Goals, Policies and Programs*, Section 1.10.2 of the *Resources Appendix*, and Section 2.12 of the *Hazards Appendix* of the General Plan. Although artificial reduction of natural fluvial transport of sediment has modified natural beach sand replenishment patterns, beach erosion continues more or less independently of man's activities, and all Ventura County beaches are subject to a certain degree of erosion.

Evaluating impacts to dune vegetation requires contacting a biological consultant per the *Initial Study Assessment Guidelines* for Biological Resources. The degree of impact will have to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

4.8.3 Mitigation Measures

Efforts are underway through the Beach Erosion Authority for Clean Ocean and Nourishment (BEACON) coalition, a multi-agency organization that includes the counties of Ventura and Santa Barbara and the coastal cities from Santa Barbara to Oxnard, to find methods to replenish sand on the beaches between these points. This joint effort is to mutually approach the impacts of the various jurisdictions upon one another, and to jointly find solutions to the problems via mutually agreed upon measures. Among the solutions being considered are the removal of Matilija Dam, sand transport up coast, continuation of dredging operations and removal of other blockages to sand replenishment on the beaches. Dune restoration programs are also being promoted by the various agencies participating in BEACON.

Ventura County will continue to participate in the BEACON (Beach Erosion Authority for Control Operations and Nourishment) Joint Powers Agreement, created in 1986 with Santa Barbara County and all coastal cities, to promote beach sand replenishment and coordinate government funding efforts to fight beach erosion.

Activities leading to degradation, erosion or destruction of coastal dunes are not allowed by the policies of the Coastal Area Plan and Coastal Zoning Ordinance. This includes, but is not limited to, use by off-road vehicles, sand mining, filling, or dumping. Additionally, the County encourages acquisition of the McGrath Lake dunes by State Parks, and the designation of the area as a State Preserve, and the County supports less-than-fee acquisitions by the State as a means of preservation, such as open space easements and tax incentives.

Policies that have the intent of reducing the rate of beach erosion are discussed below as excerpted from the *Goals, Policies and Programs* of the General Plan.

Additional specific mitigation measures are provided through discretionary review of projects for sand and gravel mining from in river and related tributaries and review that would be required for impacts on those extractions.

The policies of the General Plan *Goals, Policies and Programs* that apply to coastal beaches and sand dunes are as follows:

1.10 2-1. Discretionary development that would cause significant impacts to coastal beaches or sand dunes shall be prohibited unless the development is conditioned to mitigate the impacts to less than significant levels.

1.10.2-2. Discretionary developments that would result in the removal of dune vegetation shall be conditioned to replace the vegetation.

1.10.2-3. All shoreline protective structures that alter natural shoreline processes shall be designed to eliminate or mitigate adverse impacts on local shoreline sand supplies.

1.10.2-4. Discretionary permits for all mining activities in County streams and rivers shall incorporate all feasible measures to mitigate beach sand replenishment impacts.

The policies of the General Plan which apply to coastal wave and beach erosion hazards are as follows:

2.12.2-1. All permits for seawalls, revetments, groins, retaining walls, pipelines and coastal outfalls shall be designed to mitigate wave hazards and protect against further beach erosion, and shall be referred to the County Public Works Agency to be reviewed for possible impacts on the beach area and ocean floor.

2.12.2-2. Discretionary development in areas adjacent to coastal beaches shall be allowed only if the Public Works Agency determines that wave action and beach erosion are not hazards to the proposed development, or that the hazard would be mitigated to a less-than-significant level, and that the project will not contribute significantly to beach erosion."

4.8.4 Residual Impact

The impact of future discretionary development for mining of aggregate resources, which can affect the deposition of sand, is potentially significant, but must be reviewed on a project-by-project basis because the impact is too speculative to be addressed at this time. Imposing General Plan policies and Zoning Ordinance standards on future discretionary development can substantially reduce the potential significant impacts from aggregate extraction and processing on the beaches and sand dunes. However, future environmental analysis may determine that some mitigation measures may not be feasible to reduce some impacts to a less-than-significant level and the decision-making body may find overriding considerations and allow the significant impacts to occur.

4.9 Seismic/Geologic Hazards

Seismic/geologic hazards include fault rupture, ground shaking, liquefaction, seiche, tsunami, landslides/mudslides, expansive soils and subsidence. These terms are defined as follows:

Fault: A fracture in the earth's crust accompanied by displacement of one side of the fracture with respect to the other side.

Ground shaking: The physical movement of the land surface due to earthquakes.

Liquefaction: A process by which water-saturated granular soils change from a solid to a liquid state, usually as a result of ground shaking.

Seiche (saysh): A wave that oscillates in an enclosed or partially enclosed body of water.

Tsunami (tsoo naa' me): A traveling ocean wave of extremely long wavelength and period, generated by disturbances of the ocean floor, typically associated with earthquakes, volcanoes or major submarine landslides.

Landslide/Mudslide: The movement of a mass of rock, soil, or mixture of both (debris/mud flow) down a slope. Landslides can be classified in two ways: the first describes the material and the second describes the type of movement (e.g. rock fall, mudflow). The type of material is usually one of three; rock, debris, soil. The movement is grouped into one of five types: falls, topples, slides, spreads, and flows.

Expansive Soils: Soils that expand or swell (increase in volume) when wet and contract or shrink (decrease in volume) when dried.

Subsidence: Any settling or sinking of the ground surface arising from the withdrawal of fluids, typically oil, gas and water or from decay of materials (peat oxidation).

A glossary of seismic/geologic hazards terminology can be found in the Ventura County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines and the *Hazards Appendix* of the General Plan.

Threshold criteria for determining whether a project is potentially at risk with respect to fault rupture is its location within any of the following areas: 1) A State of California designated Alquist-Priolo Special Fault Study Zone, 2) A County of Ventura designated Fault Hazard Area, 3) A County of Ventura designated Potential Fault Hazard Area.

Ground shaking hazards are ubiquitous throughout Ventura County and are accommodated by the Ventura County Building Code. The effects of ground shaking hazards are required to be considered within the existing framework of grading and building code ordinances, which apply to all sites and projects. Consequently, special threshold criteria for ground shaking hazard are not established.

Threshold criteria for determining whether a project is potentially susceptible to liquefaction are: project location with respect to mapped liquefaction-susceptible areas on the County General Plan maps, on maps contained in Division of Mines and Geology Open-File Report 76-5LA and whether the project is located in a shallow bedrock area versus an area underlain by recent or older alluvium.

Most tsunamis and seiches are smaller than the design floods of the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Threshold criteria for tsunami hazard is whether the project is located in a mapped area of tsunami hazard as shown on the County General Plan *Hazards Appendix* maps and FIRM maps on file with the County Planning Division of the Resource Management Agency. For most portions of the north and south coastal areas, the tsunami hazard does not extend to areas more than 50 feet above sea level. For most areas along the coastal plain, the tsunami hazard extends inland for approximately one mile. Areas subject to seiche hazards are those located within 10 feet vertical elevation from an enclosed body of water such as a bay, lake or reservoir.

Landslide/mudflow hazards generally exist in and at the base of hillside terrain where channel erosion, weathering and tectonic movement have caused unstable conditions. Earthquakes and/or heavy periods of rain may trigger actual movement. A particular threat of landslide/mudflow exists in all

areas that have already experienced mass movement and in areas subject to changes in topography and moisture content. This basically includes all hillside areas in Ventura County-defined as areas with slopes greater than 10%. The threshold for landslide/mudflow hazard is determined by the lead agency based on the location of the site or project within, or outside of, hillside terrain.

Expansive soils are present throughout most areas of Ventura County, including both low-lying and hillside terrain. They are present in some areas in thick accumulations and in others as a thin cover. Beaches, sea cliffs, bare rock and active stream channels are usually free of expansive soil accumulations. Expansive soil hazards are assessed and mitigated within the existing regulatory framework of both the Public Works Agency and the Building and Safety Department. As such, an expansive soil hazard is considered to exist where soils with an expansion index greater than 20 are present.

Subsidence hazards are particularly related to project type. Probable subsidence zones are represented on geologic hazard maps in the Ventura County General Plan *Hazards Appendix* based on information supplied by the U.S. Coast and Geological Survey. Subsidence studies are required on all new water and oil well projects in Ventura County and for all utility and drainage facility projects in the Oxnard Plain.

4.9.1 Environmental Setting

Seismic/geologic hazards of the County are summarized as follows:

- The County lies within the seismically active region of Southern California and is transected by many faults; some of these faults are considered active, some potentially active and the remainder inactive (See *Hazards Appendix*, Section 2.2).
- The County is prone to ground shaking from the movement of faults inside as well as outside the County (See *Hazards Appendix*, Section 2.3).
- There is a liquefaction hazard in several areas of the County, particularly in the Oxnard Plain and Pleasant Valley, and in areas in and around the Ventura and Santa Clara rivers that are underlain by extensive alluvial deposits (See *Hazards Appendix*, Section 2.4).
- Seiches can result in large and destructive oscillations that produce waves tens of feet above normal water levels in a closed or restricted body of water such as a lake or within a harbor. Ventura County has potential areas for seiches. (See *Hazards Appendix*, Section 2.5).
- All of the coastal and near coastal river areas in Ventura County are susceptible to tsunamis. (See *Hazards Appendix*, Section 2.6).
- Many hillside and coastal areas are subject to landslides and/or mudslides (See *Hazards Appendix*, Section 2.7).
- Some areas are subject to subsidence, particularly the area that reaches from Pierpoint in the north to Mugu Lagoon in the south, and extends east on the Oxnard Plain to the junction of Highways 1 and 101 (See *Hazards Appendix,* Section 2.8).
- Even though expansive soils are scattered throughout the County, their potential impact on structures is limited to just a few developed areas: portions of the Ojai Valley, the Camarillo Hills and areas around the community of Moorpark. The presence of expansive soils in these developed areas presents no threat, however, because soils tests and engineering solutions can overcome the dangers of expansive soils. (See *Hazards Appendix*, Section 2.9).

4.9.2 Impacts

The General Plan recognizes existing zoning and land use designations that allow building construction and development activity (Figure 3.1-General Land Use Map of the *Goals, Policies and Programs*). In general, placement of any kind of human development or activity in any portion of the County makes it subject to exposure to seismic activity given the geologic nature of the region.

The impacts from a major earthquake occurring in or near the County could be the loss of lives and other casualties, extensive property damage, fires and hazardous material spills and other ensuing hazards. The effects could be aggravated by aftershocks and by the secondary affects of fire, hazardous material/chemical accidents and possible failure of the waterways and dams. Damage control and disaster relief support would also be affected, including assistance to trapped or injured persons, need for emergency medical care, food and provision of temporary shelter. Additionally, identification and burial of many dead persons would pose difficult problems; public health would be a major concern. Mass evacuation may be essential to save lives. Some families could be separated, particularly if the earthquake should occur during working hours. Emergency operations could be hampered by the loss of communications and damage to transportation routes within, and to and from, the disaster area and by the disruption of public utilities and services.

The economic impact on the County of Ventura from a major earthquake would be considerable in terms of loss of employment and loss of tax base. Also, a major earthquake could cause serious damage and/or outage of computer facilities. The loss of such facilities could curtail or seriously disrupt the operations of banks, insurance companies and other elements of the financial community. In turn, this could affect the ability of local government, business and the population to make payments and purchases.

The impact from “faulting” is the lateral and/or vertical displacement of the ground which can cause buildings or structures to fail or be significantly damaged, resulting in the loss of the entire building or structure.

The impacts from "ground shaking" will affect buildings differently depending on many diverse variables such as the seismic wave type and direction. In a single earthquake, the shaking at one site could be 10 times stronger than the shaking at a neighboring site even though the distance to the ruptured fault is the same.

In terms of impacts on loss of lives or injury occurring from liquefaction hazards, the predominant threat exists in the Oxnard Plain, Santa Rosa and Pleasant Valley, the Ventura and Santa Clara River flood plains and portions of Ojai, Thousand Oaks, Simi Valley, and Newbury Park. In addition, those communities located in the Ventura River flood plain having concentrations of people, especially in single-family homes, may be affected. A number of schools could be affected by liquefaction, although they are in the moderate hazard zone, including DeAnza Junior High and all of the schools of Rio School District, and Rio Mesa High School. The Briggs Road Industrial Park is located in the high hazard zone, as are the nearby industries in the County areas of Saticoy. Other areas that could be affected include: (1) Ormond Beach Generating Plant and most of the high voltage transmission lines on the Oxnard Plain and crossing the Santa Clara and Ventura Rivers; (2) most of the oil facilities along Ventura Avenue, and (3) the entire Naval Base Ventura County, Point Mugu. There are also numerous pipelines and other underground utilities that could be affected on the Oxnard Plain and near the rivers.

Simi Valley appears to have a high liquefaction potential in the southern part of both the east and west basins. Most of the remainder of the Calleguas Creek area appears to have adequate drainage to avoid the hazard, except for the lower Arroyo Conejo. Higher groundwater elevations may be present in the lower Arroyo Conejo due to the discharge from the City of Thousand Oaks Hill Canyon Wastewater Treatment Plant. This plant may contribute to higher groundwater levels in the western Santa Rosa Valley area and along Calleguas Creek further to the west. Thousand Oaks may have problems in the low-lying valley areas, including Hidden Valley, because of their alluvial nature.

With regard to impacts from seiches, a seiche can be considered very similar to a tsunami with the difference being that the water waves are generated in a closed or restricted body of water such as a lake or within a harbor. The shaking of an earthquake (or other vibration) can result in large and destructive oscillations that produce waves tens of feet above normal lake (water) level. In harbors (such as Ventura Harbor, Mandalay Bay and the Port of Hueneme) and closed or restricted bays, these waves can destroy harbor and shore facilities. The impacts from seiches upon lakes would be a function of how much development has occurred around the lakes, along with the potential for overspill in lakes created by dams.

Impacts from tsunamis include deaths as a result of drowning, destruction of structures and marine vessels, flooding, damage or destruction of beach and estuary habitats, polluted water supplies, and damaged gas lines. Tsunamis are confined to coastal areas and, thus, are not greatly related to the majority of the General Plan.

The impacts from landslides and mudslides can be the loss of property and lives countywide, as much of the County has unstable geologic conditions. The General Plan allows for development throughout the County. Building construction, mining, road construction, etc., would involve displacement, compaction and over-covering of soil. Any grading associated with these activities will inevitably involve some degree of change to natural topography (cutting and filling of land), particularly in hillside areas. Landslides and mudslides could be exacerbated by these activities.

Expansive soils most often have impacts on structures. Even though expansive soils are scattered throughout the County, their potential impact on structures is limited to just a few developed areas: portions of the Ojai Valley, the Camarillo Hills and areas around the community of Moorpark. The presence of expansive soils in these developed areas presents no threat, however, because soils tests and engineering solutions can overcome the dangers of expansive soils.

Subsidence that results from groundwater withdrawal can be responsible for numerous structural effects. Most seriously affected are long, linear surface infrastructure facilities that are sensitive to slight changes in gradient or slope. Drainage courses, roads, rail lines, wells, oil/gas pipelines, and utility (water, gas, power, and sewer) lines are potentially the most vulnerable to damage. Basically, the process by which this most important type of subsidence occurs involves the extraction of a large quantity of water from an unconsolidated aquifer. As water is removed from the aquifer, the total weight of the overburden that the water used to help to support is placed on the alluvial structure; the overburden can then become compressed. If fine-grained silts and clays make up portions of the aquifer, the additional load can squeeze the water out of these layers and into the coarser grained portions of the aquifer. All of this compaction produces a net loss in volume and hence a depression in the land surface. Subsidence caused by oil and gas extraction is similar in effect to that caused by water extraction.

Potential inundation must also be viewed as a potential secondary effect of subsidence in the County. Both the ocean and the Santa Clara River could flood into depressed areas of the Oxnard Plain. If a naturally low area is further depressed by subsidence, it is reasonable to assume that the damage will be more severe than if the subsidence had not occurred. In the case of the coastal portion of the Oxnard Plain, beach erosion could extend further inland due to the additional loss of elevation caused by subsidence.

Numerous other secondary effects can be identified. Most of these are related to the disruption of services provided by various structures that might be damaged by subsidence. Loss of life would probably occur only as a secondary effect of subsidence, say as the result of localized flooding.

4.9.3 Mitigation Measures

The General Plan policies and State and local building codes contain safeguards that avoid the creation of unstable earth conditions and changes in geologic substructures to mitigate seismic hazards. The General Plan *Goals, Policies and Programs* contain the following policies:

Fault Rupture

2.2.2-1 Prohibit development within any fault hazard area unless detailed seismic-geologic investigation confirms that such development on the specific site would not be hazardous.

2.2.2-2 Prohibit structures from being located over or within 50 feet of any active or potentially active fault.

2.2.2-4 Designate land in fault hazard areas as Open Space or Agriculture on the General Land Use Maps, where feasible.

2.2.2-5 Plan roads and utility conduits to avoid crossing active or potentially active faults, where feasible. Where such location is unavoidable, the design will include measures to reduce the effects of any fault movement as much as possible.

2.2.2-6 Prohibit the construction of essential facilities and facilities that have a high occupancy potential within fault hazard areas.

Ground-shaking

2.3.2 All structures designed for human occupancy shall incorporate engineering measures to mitigate the risk of ground-shaking.

Liquefaction

2.4.2 Require a soils-engineering and geologic-seismic analysis within areas prone to liquefaction prior to the issuance of building or grading permits.

Seiche

2.5.2 Take the seiche hazard into account in the design of all development within a Seiche Hazard Area.

Tsunami

2.6.2 Essential facilities, special occupancy structures and hazardous materials storage facilities should not be located in tsunami hazard areas.

Landslides/Mudslides

2.7.2-1 Prohibit development in mapped landslide/mudslide hazard areas unless adequate geologic and soils engineering investigations are performed, and appropriate and sufficient safeguards are incorporated into the project design.

2.7.2-2 In landslide/mudslide hazard areas, prohibit alteration of the land that is likely to increase the hazard, including concentration of water through drainage, irrigation, or septic systems, removal of vegetative cover, undercutting of the bases of slopes or other improper grading methods.

2.7.2-3 Require drainage plans that direct runoff and drainage away from slopes for construction in hillside areas.

Expansive Soils

2.8.2-1 All construction must conform to the County Building Code standards.

2.8.2-2 Require that a geotechnical report be submitted for each subdivision of land.

2.8.2-3 Prohibit habitable structures and individual sewage disposal systems from being placed on or in expansive soils, unless suitable mitigation measures are incorporated to prevent the adverse effects of these soils.

Subsidence

2.9.2-1 Potential subsidence shall be evaluated prior to approval of new oil, gas, water or other extraction well drilling permits.

2.9.2-2 Require that the structural design of all structures recognize the potential for differential settlement and subsidence.

2.9.2-3 Prohibit structures needed for public safety or emergency services from being located where an interruption in service could result from structural failure due to subsidence. If location in such an area is unavoidable, the structure shall be designed to mitigate the hazard.

In addition, the Ventura County Building Code requires discretionary approval for grading where:

- Average natural slope exceeds 10% and the amount of excavation or fill exceeds 10,000 cubic yards; or

- Average natural slope exceeds 35% and the amount of excavation or fill exceeds 1,000 cubic yards; or
- Proposed graded slopes exceed 25 feet in vertical height; or
- Proposed grading is to occur within a recognized geologically hazardous area.

The Agricultural Hillside Erosion Control Ordinance (Ord. 3539 and 3683) requires approved hillside erosion control plans in "critical erosion areas" designated on the official Erosion Hazard Maps of southern Ventura County.

4.9.4 Residual Impact

The impact of future discretionary development by seismic/geologic hazards is potentially significant, but must be reviewed on a project-by-project basis because the impact is too speculative to be addressed at this time.

Imposing General Plan policies and County Ordinance standards on future development reduce the potential significant impacts from seismic/geologic hazards to a less-than-significant level.

4.10 Hydraulic Hazards/Flood Control and Drainage

Hydraulic hazards/flood control and drainage consist of the wearing away or deposition of land surface by wind or water. Erosion occurs naturally from weather or runoff, but can be intensified by land clearing practices. Flooding is an overflow of water onto land that is normally dry.

Erosion/siltation hazards and flooding hazards are ubiquitous throughout Ventura County and are addressed by the Ventura County Public Works Agency-Watershed Protection District's Standards and Specifications Design Manual. Erosion/siltation hazard is required to be considered within the existing framework of grading and building code ordinances, which apply to all sites and projects. Special threshold criteria for erosion/siltation hazard are, thus, not established. The effects of flooding hazards are required to be considered within the existing framework of grading and building code ordinances, which apply to all sites and projects.

4.10.1 Environmental Setting

Much of the County, particularly the western county, is, geologically, in old uplifted seabed and river alluvial fans. Consequently, because the earth in these areas is not igneous or metamorphic in nature, the earth tends to be more prone to erosion. While the region is considered to be in a Mediterranean type climate and experiences annual low rainfalls, when the rains do come, they can be torrential and devastating at times, particularly as the rain is often deposited farther upstream in the mountains and the volumes can build as the water runs toward the ocean. Many of the soils in the County are, therefore, prone to erosion. One of the side effects of that erosion is added siltation. As the water scours the softer earth, it picks up loose sediments and keeps them in suspension until the water has stopped moving and the sediments are deposited and settle out. This siltation not only adds to the turbidity of the water, affecting quality, it can also affect locations where the siltation gets deposited often filling in aquatic habitats and impacting nesting and breeding areas of various birds and other water dependent species. Erosion prone areas are also not conducive to the development of structures. Now, under stronger Federal regulations, as any development occurs that could result in increases in erosion and siltation, the developments are subject to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program administered by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency as part of the Clean Water Act of 1972 and its subsequent amendments.

Some areas of the County are in the 100-year and 500-year flood plains~~,~~. ~~t~~This is illustrated on Figure 2.10 in the *Hazards Appendix* of the existing County General Plan~~;~~ ~~a~~Also see Figure 4.10-1 of this EIR. The County has a history of flooding problems; damaging floods have occurred every five years, on average, since 1862. The largest and most damaging recorded natural floods in the Santa Clara and Ventura watersheds occurred in 1969. As a result of this flood, 13 people lost their lives and property damage estimated at $60 million occurred. For a more thorough discussion of flood hazards, see *Hazards Appendix*, Section 2.10. For an inventory of existing County flood control facilities, refer to Section 4.6.2 of the Public Facilities and Services Appendix. A map of Flood Control District red line channels and drainage area boundaries is included herein (see Figures 4.10-2a and 4.10-2b).

The County has 42 miles of coastline, some of which is in unincorporated territory and subject to such coastal hazards as wave damage and beach erosion (See *Hazards Appendix*, Section 2.12).

The need for dam failure disaster planning was demonstrated locally by the midnight collapse in March 1928 of the St. Francis Dam in Los Angeles County. A major disaster occurred after the newly constructed cement arched dam was completely filled for the first time. The ensuing flooding from the dam's total collapse resulted in the loss of over 400 lives in Ventura County as floodwaters washed out homes and structures along the banks of the Santa Clara River. The communities of Piru, Fillmore, Santa Paula, Bardsdale, Saticoy, Montalvo and El Rio sustained extensive life and property loss from the flood.

More recently, the San Fernando Earthquake in 1971 resulted in ground shaking in the vicinity of the Van Norman Dam in Los Angeles County. As a result of the earthquake, structural damage threatened the dam's immediate collapse. Approximately 80,000 residents in the San Fernando

Valley had to be evacuated to areas of safety in the midst of many other earthquake-related emergencies.

The lessons learned from these events and others are outlined in California's Dam Safety Act (Section 8589.5 California Emergency Services Act). This legislation requires the preparation of dam inundation maps showing areas of potential flooding in the event of sudden or total dam failure as well as emergency procedures for notification and evacuation of nearby residents.

In Ventura County, much of the development pattern followed the agricultural development of the County. Because many of the prime growing areas were in the fertile plains along old river and stream courses, and because patterns of goods movement also followed those areas because it was less difficult to construct the roadways and railroad beds, many of the populated areas also grew up along those floodplains. With the advent of the development of dams for water storage and hydroelectric generation, these developed areas are now vulnerable to dam failure. While the prospects of dam failure are generally considered remote, the possibility of such an event cannot be taken lightly in view of the widespread potential for damage and loss of life.

A list of dams with inundation potential in Ventura County, along with a map demonstrating areas subject to inundation in the event of a dam failure, are depicted in the *Hazards Appendix* of the County General Plan. The map is for illustrative purposes only and does not indicate specific areas that may be affected be failure of specific dams. Instead, detailed information of the latter type may be obtained from the agency that owns the dam in question, or the California Department of Water Resources, Division of Safety of Dams.

4.10.2 Impacts

Cumulatively, development on vacant land in the County will tend to increase the rate and amount of runoff during storms by increasing the number of impervious surfaces; water that would otherwise infiltrate the soil will instead enter drainage channels, increasing potential flood flows. The cumulative effects of all building construction envisaged in the County and city general plans could be significant in terms of flooding, particularly in areas with a density of more than one building per acre. These are areas shown as Urban or Existing Community on the General Land Use Map of the *Goals, Policies, and Programs*.

The building of structures in a flood plain or on beaches could place such structures and their inhabitants or users at risk to loss of life, injury, damage to property, and economic and social dislocations, Also, building in flood plains and beach areas could alter the course of floodwaters downstream, interfering with natural erosion patterns and water course dynamics and, sometimes, exacerbate the situation by accelerating the erosion processes.

For example, the erosion of coastal beaches is a very complex problem. The beach is in a perpetual state of dynamic disequilibria, adjusting to changes in waves, currents, tides and sediment deposition. The force that moves sand along the shoreline, creating the phenomenon known as the "littoral drift", is provided by waves breaking at an angle along the beaches. The sand found on Ventura County beaches travels with the littoral drift from the northwest to southeast.

Man-made shoreline alteration can have severe effects on this natural process. Some initial solutions may be shortsighted and aggravate erosion problems and pose secondary erosion impacts. Effective beach erosion management requires a comprehensive understanding of the erosion process, as well as technically oriented, long-term management plans.

All beaches in Ventura County are subject to erosion to a certain degree. Even beaches stabilized by groins can erode, although they do so at a slower pace. Erosion will increase in the future at all beaches if sand supplies to the coast are decreased. Building in these areas still potentially puts structures located here at risk.

Flooding could also result from the structural failure of one or more of the dams listed in Section 2.11 of the *Hazards Appendix*. The General Plan could result in additional development in dam inundation areas depicted on Figure 2.11 of the *Hazards Appendix*. However, this is not considered to be a significant impact, since a dam failure that impacts the County is considered to be a remote possibility.

The California Dam Safety Act requires each dam to be inspected every three years. Locally, officials of the State Office of Emergency Services, through their regional Los Angeles office, perform these inspections. An emergency response plan that discusses evacuation and personnel responsibilities is also required for each dam.

4.10.3 Mitigation Measures

The erosion/siltation and flood hazards may be mitigated through a variety of measures, some corrective and some preventive. Corrective measures include warning and relief programs, flood-proofing of existing structures, and the construction of flood control works (channel improvements, levees, and dams). Flood warnings are issued by the U.S. Weather Bureau or the Watershed Protection District, and relayed to the public through the local news media and Sheriff's and Police departments.

Structural works are the traditional means of alleviating flood hazards; but such facilities are extremely costly and are rarely able to keep up with development.

Other preventive measures for alleviating the hazard include public acquisition of flood plain lands, public information programs, development policies, and regulations. The most effective means of preventing flood damage appears to be flood plain management (i.e., the regulation of the types of activities permitted in flood hazard areas). Flood plain management addresses the problems encountered in the utilization of flood plains and considers the total spectrum of possible solutions to problems involving possible future land uses. Flood plain management cannot, however, protect all existing development. Therefore, to provide for the maximum alleviation of the flood hazard, a combination of corrective and preventive measures is necessary.

The issue of flood plain management is dealt with in several sets of regulations. The General Plan *Goals, Policies and Programs* contain the following policies:

2.10.2-1 Land use in the *floodway* should be limited to open space, agriculture, or passive to low intensity recreational uses, subject to the approval of the County Watershed Protection District. The *floodway*'s principal use is for safely conveying floodwater away from people and property.

2.10.2-2 Within areas subject to flooding, the County shall require the recordation of a *Notice of Flood Hazard* or dedication of a *flowage easement* with the County Recorder for all divisions of land and *discretionary permits*.

2.10.2-3 *Development* shall be protected from a 100-year flood if built in the *flood plain* areas.

2.10.2-4 The design of any structures which are constructed in *flood plain* areas as depicted on the Hazards Protection Maps …, shall be governed by Federal regulations as well as the County Flood Plain Management Ordinance and shall incorporate measures to reduce flood damage to the structure and to eliminate any increased potential flood hazard in the general area due to such construction.

2.11.2 *Dams* shall be designed to withstand catastrophic events. The dams should be located to ensure their safety from all maximum credible seismic events.

4.6.2-1 All necessary flood control and drainage facilities shall be constructed to meet the minimum standards of the Public Works Agency and the County Flood Control District consistent with the *goals, policies* and *programs* of the General Plan.

4.6.2-2 *Discretionary development* shall be conditioned to provide flood control and drainage facilities deemed by the Public Works Agency and Flood Control District as necessary for the development, and shall be required to contribute toward flood control facilities necessitated by cumulative *development.*

Other regulations are contained in the Subdivision Ordinance and Building Code, which require that buildings and improvements be protected from flood damage. The Planning and the Building and Safety Departments enforce this provision based on the recommendations of the Watershed

Protection District. The standard condition imposed on development is that the homes be protected (by elevation, channel improvement, dikes, or flood-proofing) from the 100-year flood. Further regulation is provided by the County's Flood Plain Management Ordinance.

The Ventura County Watershed Protection District, which is governed by the Board of Supervisors, has the authority to maintain and construct flood control facilities on the channels shown on the District's Comprehensive Plan. Ordinance FC-18, adopted in 1972, requires that a permit from the Watershed Protection District be obtained for most activities within the bed and banks of these channels.

4.10.4 Residual Impact

The potential impact of future discretionary development by or on hydrologic hazards/flooding or on soil erosion is potentially significant, but must be reviewed on a project-by-project basis because the impact is too speculative to be addressed at this time. In summary, the above-mentioned mitigation measures reduce the potential flood impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Figure 4.10-1
Flood Plains – South Half

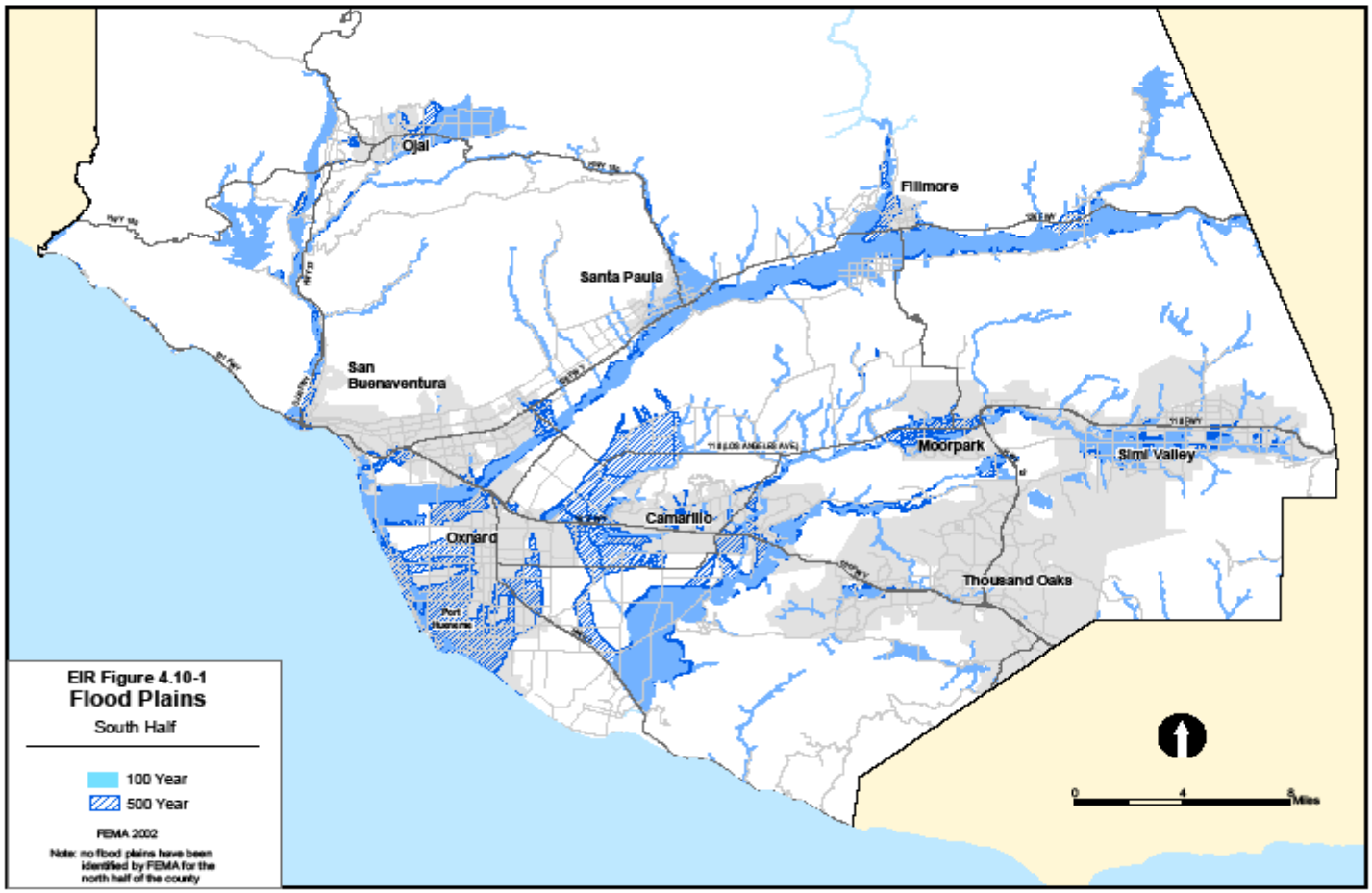


Figure 4.10-2a
Flood Control – North Half

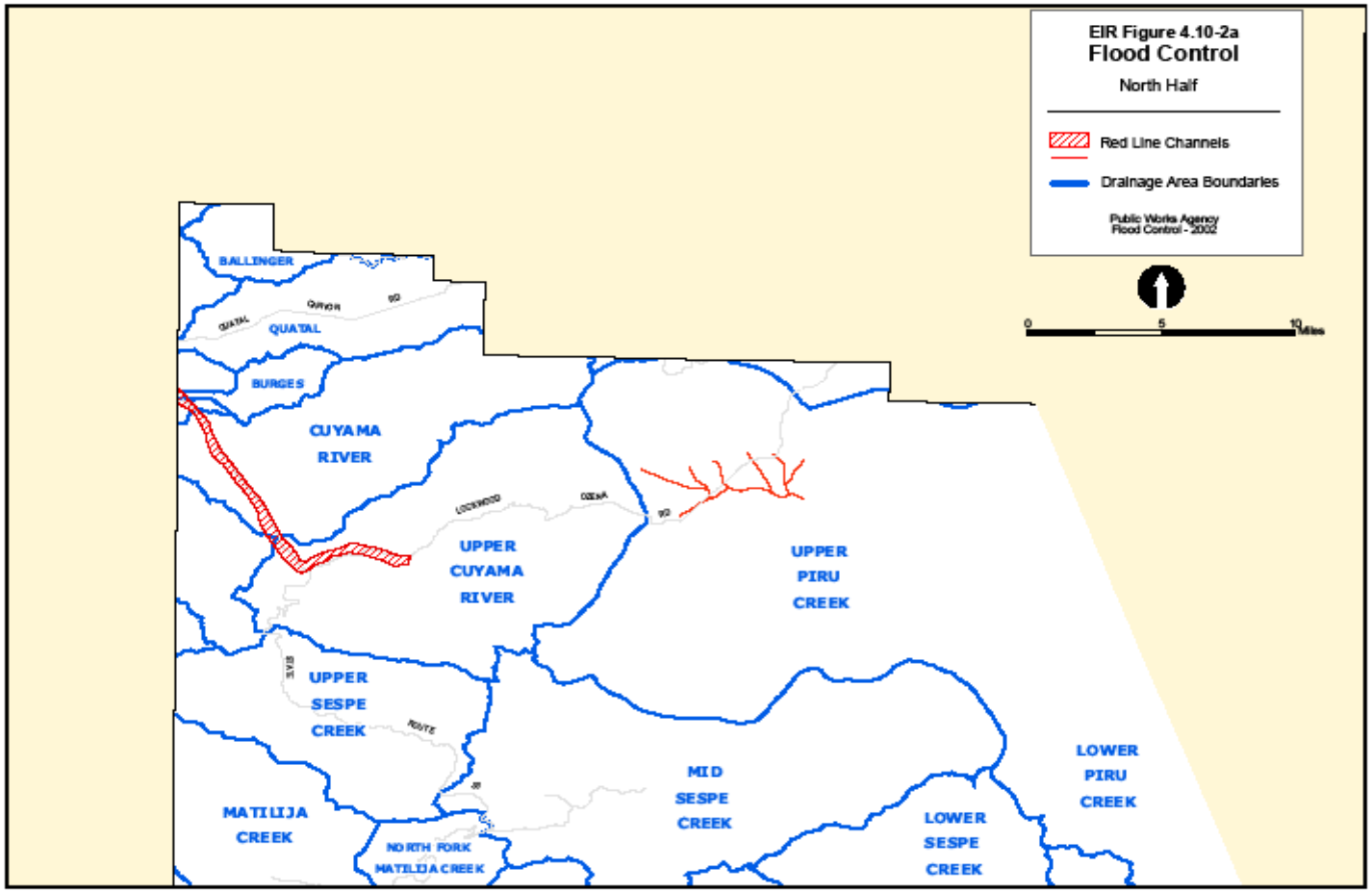
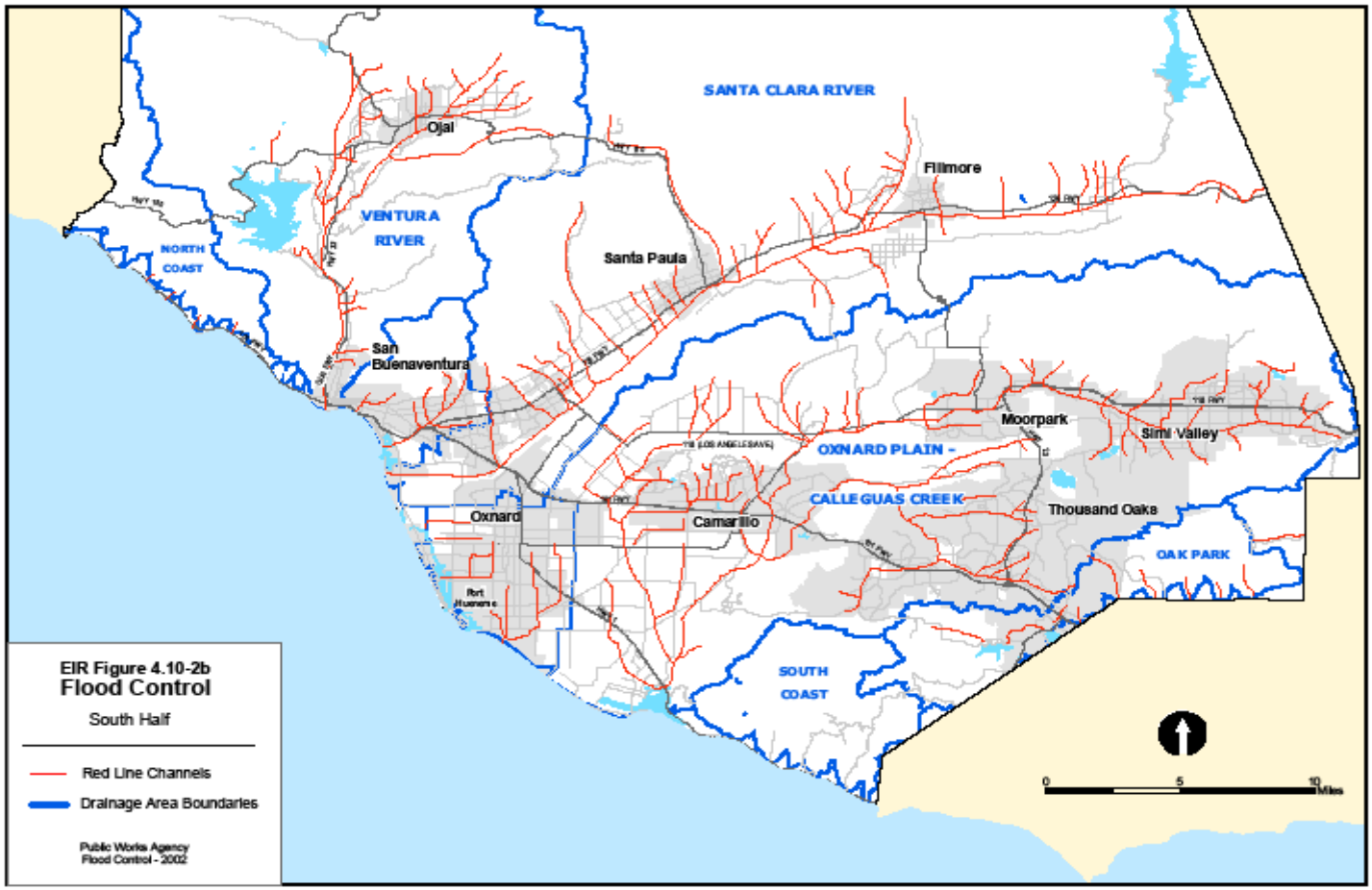


Figure 4.10-2b
Flood Control – South Half



4.11 Fire Hazards/Fire Protection Services

Fire hazard is defined as the potential loss of life and/or property due to fire. Development that increases or may cause an increase of the hazard or menace of fire to a greater degree than that customarily recognized as normal by the Ventura County Fire Protection District (VCFPD) is considered potentially significant. Ventura County Building Code, Article IV Section Uniform Building Code 1601 identifies high fire hazard areas as any area within 500 feet of uncultivated brush, grass, or forest covered land wherein an authorized representative of the District determines that a potential fire hazard exists due to the presence of such flammable growth. Projects located within a high fire hazard area may have a significant impact.

Fire protection services include:

Distance/response time - The ~~relation- ship~~ relationship between the distance that fire protection service facilities and equipment are located from the scene of the emergency, and the time in which they are able to respond to the emergency.

Personnel/equipment/facilities - The number of persons and amount and types of equipment and facilities employed in and available for purposes of response in the event of an emergency.

Project distance from a full time paid fire department is considered a significant impact if the project is in excess of five (5) miles, measured from the apron of the fire station to the structure or pad of the proposed structure. Fire sprinklers will mitigate the impact and will be required as per ~~Ordinance 14~~. the current adopted Ordinance of the Fire Protection District.

The response time required to service a proposed project is more difficult to forecast due to many variables (such as stop signs, grade, curves, road conditions, etc.). This information is not always available during the initial study period. However, if it appears that a response time would be in excess of 12 minutes, it would signify a significant impact.

It has been determined that, for staffing purposes, one (1) firefighter is required per every 3000-4000 persons in those areas served by the Fire District, depending on the density of development. In order to provide the equivalent of that "one firefighter per" ratio 24 hours per day, 365 days a year, it is necessary to ~~have~~ employee four ~~firefighter employees~~ Fire District staff at the ratio of one non-safety employee per every three fire safety employees, and nine fire safety employees at each station for full coverage of three crew persons per three shift periods. The salaries for these firefighters are not compensated for by a lump sum, but are to be accommodated with increased revenue from assessed value. Therefore, most projects will have an impact on personnel due to increased needs for service, but it would not be significant due to increases in assessed value to compensate for increases in staffing.

Equipment and facility concerns become significant when the magnitude of the project or the distance from existing facilities indicates that a new facility or additional equipment would be required within the proposed project.

4.11.1 Environmental Setting

A detailed discussion of the Environmental Setting for the fire hazards is described in Section 2.13 of the *Hazards Appendix* and fire protection is discussed in Section 4.8 of the *Public Facilities and Services Appendix* of the County *General Plan*. A summary of the environmental setting for fire hazards and protection is as follows:

Nature of the Hazard

Ventura County is characterized by a Mediterranean-type climate, featuring wet winters and very dry summers. Many parts of the undeveloped County contain extensive chaparral and sage plant communities; species that are fire-adapted and depend on fire for germination and sprouting. Other portions of the County, in more developed agricultural and rural communities, have introduced plants such as eucalyptus trees, a non-native species that burns hot and rapidly. During wet periods, these plants exhibit strong growth and in dry periods they become very woody and tinder-like.

The geography of Ventura County is such that the topography is very steep in many parts and the terrain makes accessibility difficult in many areas. The soils in many portions of the County are unstable when there is no vegetation on them. And water availability is limited in many parts of the County to manmade reservoirs or groundwater storage capabilities. It is important to note that with the exception of flat farmlands in the Oxnard Plain and certain other areas, all areas of Ventura County are subject to periodic wildfire episodes.

Additionally, the local meteorological phenomenon of Santa Ana winds contributes to the high incidence of wildfires in Southern California. These winds originate during the late summer and early autumn months in the hot, dry interior deserts to the east of Ventura County. They often sweep west into Ventura County, bringing with them extremely dry air masses that can exacerbate existing fires and further desiccate the chaparral and sage plant communities during the period of the year when these species have very low moisture content. Figures 4.11-1a and 4.11-1b illustrate Ventura County the high fire hazard areas of the County.

Current Fire Protection Setting

The Ventura County Fire Protection District (VCFPD) is a special district formed on May 16, 1928, and governed by a Board of Directors. The VCFPD is tasked with providing fire prevention, fire education, fire suppression and rescue services. The Ventura County Fire Protection District serves an area of 1,873 square miles, which includes 860 square miles in forest reserve.

The FPD is divided into four battalion areas and operates 31 fire stations that are strategically located throughout the County to provide fire protection for urban areas, as well as the extremely important watershed areas. The District serves the municipalities of Camarillo, Moorpark, Ojai, Port Hueneme, Simi Valley, and Thousand Oaks, and the unincorporated regions of Ventura County. The District tries to maintain its goal of keeping the average emergency response time to under five minutes in urban areas and under seven minutes in rural areas.

The FPD maintains a fleet of 47 Type One fire engines, eleven Type Two, or brush engines, and three ladder trucks, along with a wide variety of support vehicles ranging from Command vehicles to bulldozers. In 2004~~5~~, the FPD employ~~ed~~s a staff of 554~~6~~ full-time employees, ~~including~~ of which ~~419~~ 399 are safety employees.

In 2003, the VCFPD identified the following new facilities needed in the next five years.

- Replace or remodel Lake Sherwood Fire Station (Station 33)
- Replace Moorpark Fire Station (Station 42) – Under construction Dec. 2003)
- Replace or remodel Piru Fire Station (Station 28)
- Replace or remodel Malibu Fire Station (Station 56)
- Build and operate a new Fire Station in the East Moorpark area (Campus Park)
- Relocate the Support Services facility (Rice Road, Oxnard)
- Relocate the Fire Communications Center
- Enhance the Regional Training Center at Camarillo Airport
- Relocate to a new El Rio Fire Station (Station 51) due to City of Oxnard Riverpark Project
- Build and operate a new Fire Station at the north end of Erringer Road (Big Sky development)

Outside of the boundaries of Santa Paula, Fillmore, Oxnard, San Buenaventura, and the Los Padres National Forest, the VCFPD has responsibility for wildfire suppression on all private land. The VCFPD is a partner in the California Master Mutual Aid system and maintains mutual aid agreements with other adjoining fire agencies. These mutual aid agreements obligate the departments to help each other in case of a major fire, if such help is requested. Automatic aid agreements obligate the nearest fire company to respond to a fire regardless of the jurisdiction. The State Office of Emergency Service can be called upon for further aid, if necessary, as can

Federal agencies, including the Department of Agriculture, the Department of the Interior and, in extreme cases, Department of Defense.

The cities of Oxnard, Ventura and Santa Paula have their own separate paid fire departments, as does the Naval Base of Ventura County. The City of Fillmore has its own volunteer fire department. The Los Padres National Forest area of the County is served by the U.S. Forest Service.

U.S. Forest Service Fire Stations are located at:

- Chuchupate (west of Frazier Park in the Cuddy Valley area)
- Wheeler Gorge (on Highway 33 north of Ojai near Wheeler Springs)
- Oat Flat (north of Fillmore near the Sespe Oilfields)
- Ozena (on Highway 33 near junction of Lockwood Valley Road)
- Apache Saddle (3 miles west of Pine Mountain Club)
- Temescal (northeast of Piru adjacent to Lake Piru); and
- A helicopter pad on the west side of Lake Casitas.

The VCFPD constantly monitors the fire hazard in the County, and has ongoing programs for investigation and alleviation of hazardous situations. In case of a major wildfire, owners of homes and inhabitants of communities in the path of the flames are warned of the threat, and evacuation is recommended if the threat is imminent. The responsibility for warning and evacuation is in the hands of the law enforcement agencies, primarily the Sheriff's Department, since most fire hazards exist on unincorporated county territory. Evacuation can only be recommended, not ordered, since no one can force a person to leave his house. Formal evacuation routes are not predetermined, due to the unpredictability of a fire. Thus, law enforcement agencies react according to the needs of each situation.

Besides the actual fighting of fires, a great deal of time is spent by the VCFPD on preventive measures and preparation for combating fires. Fire prevention consists of making inspections of brush conditions, buildings, schools, and homes, and making recommendations for fire safety. If the brush has been cleared around the structure, a fire resistant roof installed, a sufficient supply of water is available and access is provided for the fire equipment, then there is an excellent chance to avert major damage. The chances decrease proportionately if any of these precautions are not taken.

4.11.2 Impacts

Major issues directly related to development in high fire hazard areas include higher incidence of fires due to the combustible nature of the local plant materials and climatology, increased response times, access and evacuation problems, inadequate water availability in some areas, and construction with combustible building materials. Indirect impacts are those associated with mudslides and other ground erosion following major burns.

The General Plan allows for low intensity development (Rural and Open Space) in Extreme Fire Hazard areas (as depicted on EIR Figures 4.11-1a and 4.11-1b). This could potentially expose the occupants of such structures, as well as the structures themselves, to a significant degree of fire risk. The most dangerous fires are likely to occur during Santa Ana wind conditions, when high wind speeds make wildfire control difficult.

Future development may occur as allowed by the County General Plan in the unincorporated portions of the County that are within high fire hazard areas, although changes to residential development is now significantly constrained by the county-wide SOAR Ordinance, passed in 1998, and by the Guidelines for Orderly Development, which direct commercial, industrial and urban residential development to the incorporated areas.

Cumulative development may impact existing and future fire protection facilities and services, particularly cumulative development of structures related to agriculture and structures for the

support of open-space preservation. Communities located adjacent to fire hazard areas could be at risk, but there are few critical facilities located in the hazard zone that are not adequately protected. There are, however, some particularly hazardous lightly populated locations that could be severely damaged in case of a major fire. The areas that have high brush and that have not been burned for quite some time are probably the most susceptible. Most areas of high hazard have burned at least once within the last fifty years. Therefore, these areas could be expected to burn again in the next fifty years unless some method of fuel management is undertaken.

4.11.3 Mitigation Measures

The General Plan *Goals, Policies and Programs* contains the following policies to mitigate fire hazards and impacts to fire protection facilities and equipment:

2.13.2-1 All discretionary permits shall be required, as a condition of approval, to provide adequate water supply and access for fire protection and evacuation purposes.

2.13.2-2 All *discretionary permits* in *fire hazard areas* shall be conditioned to include fire-resistant vegetation, cleared *firebreaks*, or a long-term comprehensive fuel management program as a condition of approval. Fire hazard reduction measures shall be incorporated into the design of any project in a *fire hazard area*.

2.13.2-3 New residential subdivisions shall provide not less than two means of access for emergency vehicles and resident evacuation. A deviation from this policy is only allowed when the proposed road conforms to the County Road Standards and when the County Fire Chief approves the proposed road.

2.13.2-4 All applicants for subdivisions, multi-unit residential complexes, and commercial and industrial complexes shall be required to obtain, prior to permit approval, certification from the Fire Protection District that adequate fire protection is available, or will be available prior to occupancy.

4.8.2-1 *Discretionary development* shall be permitted only if adequate water supply, access and response time for fire protection can be made available.

The County Planning Division reviews discretionary development with regard to location in conjunction with of input from the Sheriff Department and VCFPD. The two entities cooperate in establishing wildfire response and evacuation plans, as envisioned in the Ventura County Multi-Hazard Functional Emergency Response Plan. The County Building and Safety Division and the County Public Works Agency work for better building design, property identification and provision of infrastructure to aid in fire fighting and evacuation. Currently, the County Fire Protection District reviews all discretionary development to ensure that an adequate level of fire protection can be provided.

Ministerial development is regulated under the California Building Code, Ventura County Building Code, California Uniform Fire Code, and regulations of the VCFPD.

The *Ventura County Building Code* states that roof coverings shall be fire retardant, except no wooden shakes or shingles treated or untreated shall be permitted. Fire-resistive protection of exterior walls and openings, underfloor areas, roof overhangs and soffits, balconies and decks, patio covers and carports shall be protected with materials approved for 1-hour fire resistive construction.

Another important management tool is the *Ventura County Waterworks Manual (Sec. 2.33)*, which includes requirements for minimum fire flow rates for water mains. Minimum required fire flows are identified in the Manual, however, commercial and industrial building fire flow requirements are determined by using the *Uniform Fire Code*, current adopted edition. Minimum fire flow standards for Ventura County are 1,000 gallons per minute (GPM) in residential areas, 1,250 GPM minimum in commercial areas, and 1,500 GPM minimum in industrial areas. *Section 10.301 of the Uniform Fire Code* regulates commercial and industrial projects.

Finally, through the County Water Works Manual, the County Fire Protection District requires that all new developments connect to a public water system or private water company if available, or the provision of an on-site water supply (private well with a water storage supply) as a condition of

approval. The current adopted ~~Ventura County Fire Protection District~~ Ordinance ~~No. 14 – Section 5~~ of the Fire Protection District requires new construction located more than five miles from an existing or planned fire station to contain an automatic fire extinguishing system.

Also, the County or City *Road Standards Manual* details in the VCFPD *Private Road Guidelines* specify minimum road widths for access by fire protection crews and equipment. All County road width requirements are considered adequate to allow fire access. The maximum cul-de-sac length will be limited to 800 feet to ensure proper access by fire protection crews and equipment and evacuation of residents.

Planning Division zoning standards for minimum distances between structures also are an effective fire protection tool. The Uniform Building Code requires minimum building separation distances when more than one building is located on a lot and sets requirements for building setbacks from the property line.

The VCFPD requires annual 100-foot brush clearance around structures in the chaparral/sage areas, or a minimum setback distance of 100 feet from the identified impact zone of any Federal or State protected species on any developable parcel. The authority for this requirement is the *California Health and Safety Code Division 12 Part 2.7 and Division 12 Part 5*. Additionally, the Ventura County Fire Protection District adopted an ordinance which follows the *Uniform Fire Code Article 1, Article 11 as amended, and Appendix II-A*.

Another aspect of fire hazard management in Ventura County was the creation of a prescribed burn program as mandated by Senate Bill 1704 (Vegetation Management Program, July 16, 1980). This program has been proven effective since its inception. This program aims at selective burn-off of limited areas of the chaparral/sage in order to prevent future large, uncontrolled wildfires. It also aims at encouraging the natural vegetation cycle of seed germination engendered by natural burns. Other benefits from prescribed fire include range, watershed and wildlife habitat improvement. All things considered, controlled burning seems to be the best fuel management method currently available, although fuel and firebreaks are also used.

The VCFPD, through Ordinance #15, imposes fees for acquiring and improving fires stations at the time when building permits are issued. According to VCFPD officials, County Building and Safety collects fees for commercial and industrial buildings prior to building permits issued and for residential building prior to the issuance of certificates of occupancy in the unincorporated area around Camarillo, Moorpark, Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks, and the incorporated cities of Camarillo and Moorpark.

VCFPD officials state that the Ordinance is working well for the area served (Southeast part of the County) where growth is occurring, but the developer fees need to be raised to reflect current building costs. Ordinance No. 15 does not, however, reduce the impact and cost of building new fire stations to a less than significant level, as it only covers fire stations in the Southeast portion of the County. The VCFPD must currently go to the Board of Supervisors to obtain funds for construction of fire stations in the remainder of the County.

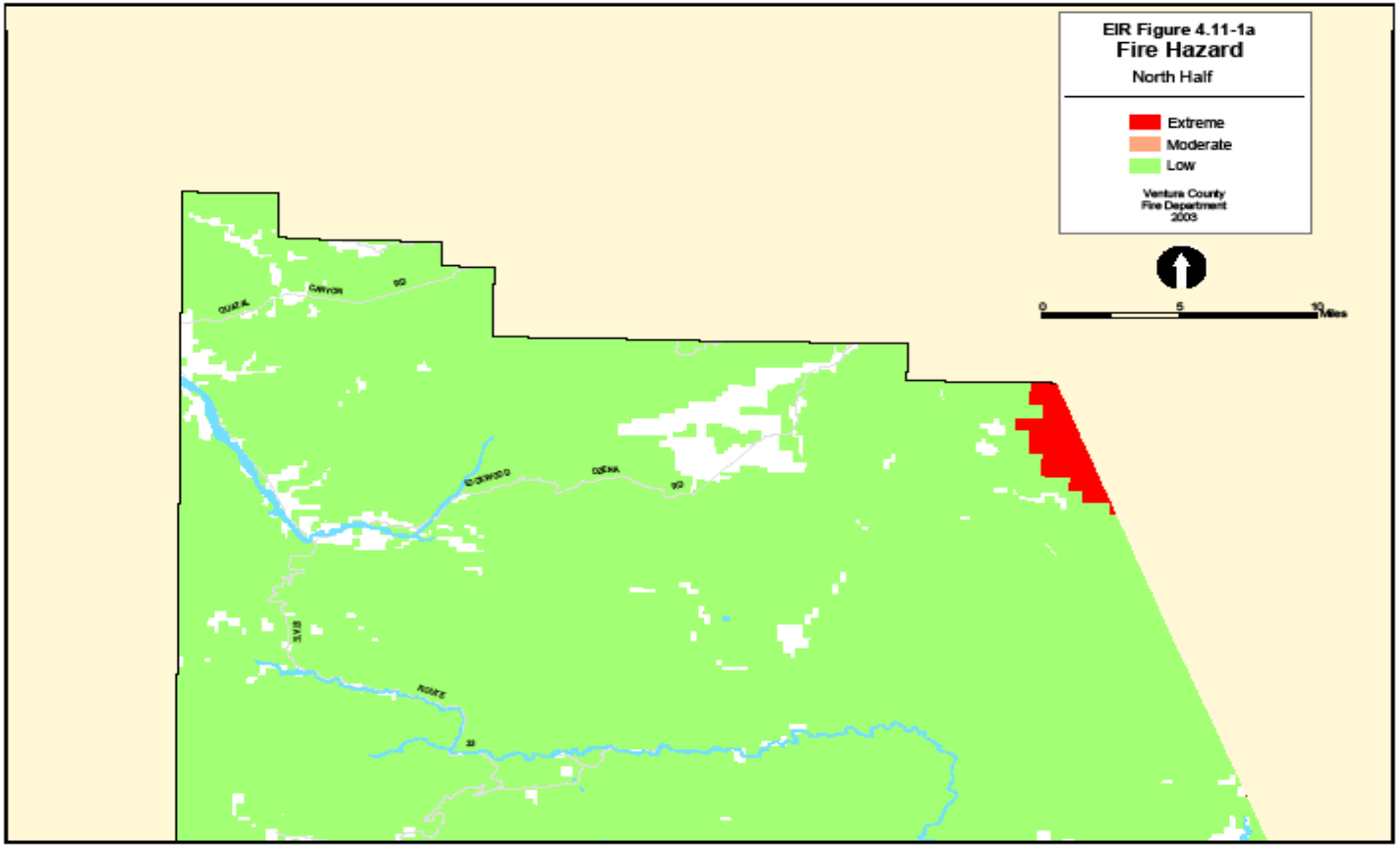
After a fire, efforts must be made to reduce the risk from mudslides. This could include reseeding areas by the State Division of Forestry, the Ventura County Watershed Protection District, or the individual homeowners. Even if reseeding has been undertaken, precautionary measures should be taken to protect communities and individual structures from mudslides.

4.11.4 Residual Impact

The above requirements, if strictly adhered to, reduce the fire hazard of development in high fire hazard areas to a less than significant level.

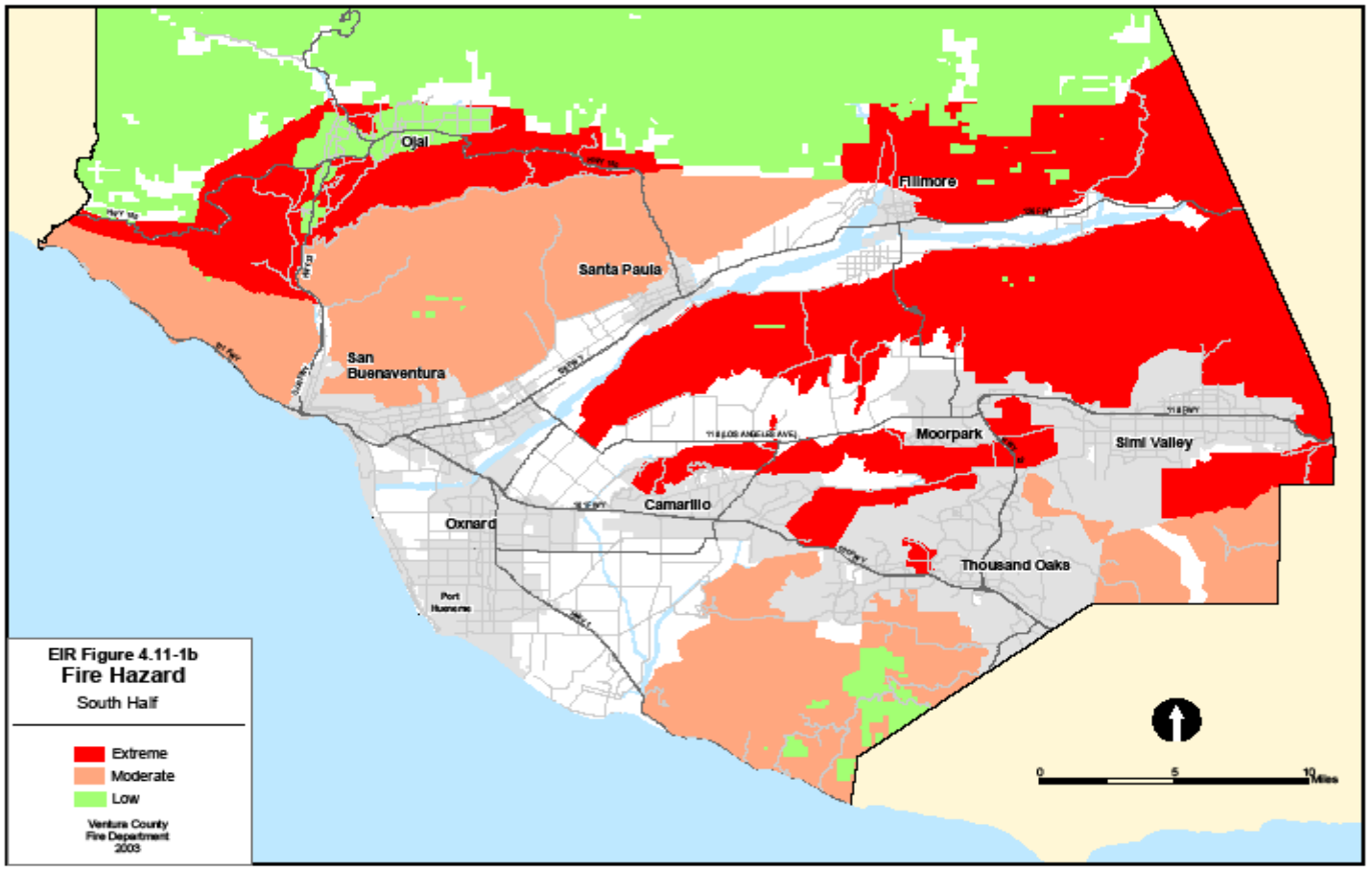
Cumulative development during the planning period to the year 2020 and located outside of the Southeast portion of the county will significantly impact the need for additional personnel, equipment and facilities, if existing levels of fire protection are to be maintained.

Figure 4.11-1a
Fire Hazard Map - North



Half

Figure 4.11-1b
Fire Hazard Map - South Half



4.12 Hazardous Materials and Waste/Public Health

"Hazardous material" means any material that, because of its quantity, concentration, physical or chemical characteristics poses a significant present or potential hazard to human health and safety or to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment. Hazardous materials include, but are not limited to, hazardous substances, hazardous waste, and any material that the administering agency or Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) determines to be potentially injurious to the health and safety of persons or harmful to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment.

The storage, handling and disposal of potentially hazardous materials must be in conformance with the requirements set forth in the following regulations:

Underground Storage Tanks - California Health and Safety Code, Division 20, Chapter 6.7 and the California Code of Regulations Title 23, Division 3, Chapter 16.

Business Plan (BP) - California Health and Safety Code, Section 25504.

Risk Management Plan (RMP) - California Health and Safety Code, Division 20, Chapter 6.95, Article 2.

CUPA - California Health and Safety Code, Division 20, Chapter 6.11.

"Hazardous waste" includes the following:

- A waste, or combination of wastes, which because of it's quantity, concentration, physical or chemical characteristics, may cause, or significantly contribute to an increase in mortality or an increase in serious irreversible, or incapacitating reversible illness; or may pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or environment when improperly treated, stored, transported, or disposed of, or otherwise managed.
- A waste that meets any of the criteria for the identification of a hazardous waste adopted by the State Department of Toxic Substances Control pursuant to Section 25141, Division 20, Chapter 6.5 of the California Health and Safety code.
- Hazardous waste includes, but is not limited to Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) hazardous waste.
- Unless expressly provided otherwise, the term hazardous waste shall be understood to also include extremely hazardous waste and acutely hazardous waste.

The storage, handling and disposal of potentially hazardous waste must be in conformance with the requirements set forth in the following regulations:

- Enabling Legislation - California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 22, Division 4.5.
- California Health and Safety Code, Division 20, Chapter 6.5.
- Permit Requirements - Ventura County Ordinance Chapter 5 (Hazardous Substances), Article 1, (Certified Unified Program Agency).

The above State legislation and local ordinances have been enacted for the purpose of preventing contamination from improper storage, handling and disposal of hazardous wastes. It is also the intent of these regulations to establish procedures so that the generators of hazardous wastes will be encouraged to employ reduction technology and destruction of their hazardous wastes prior to disposal.

Household Hazardous Waste Facilities, which are a completely separate category, require a discretionary permit and are subject to further CEQA review by the Environmental Health Division.

A glossary of hazardous materials and waste/public health terminology can be found in the Ventura County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines and the *Hazards Appendix* of the General Plan. For a

more complete list of definitions, the reader is directed to California Health and Safety Code, Division 20, Chapter 6.5, Article 2, Section 25110 et al.

Public Health" refers to any action that entails human health related issues such as, but not limited to, vectors, bio-aerosols and other pathogens or environmental factors that may pose a substantial present or potential hazard to public health.

4.12.1 Environmental Setting

The growing magnitude of the need for proper management of hazardous materials and wastes is demonstrated by the fact that an estimated 264 million metric tons of hazardous waste were generated nationwide in 1981 according to a national survey conducted by the Environmental Protection Agency (last current information). The Southern California Region generated a total of between two and three million tons of hazardous waste in 1983, and it was predicted, then, that this amount would increase by 40 percent by the year 2000 for the Southern California region. No new information has been developed to confirm this increase. Currently there are over 3,000 facilities in Ventura County using and storing hazardous materials. Of these, approximately 39 are using materials identified as being "acutely hazardous."

The greatest volumes of waste generated by industry in 1986 were alkaline solutions and aqueous solutions (nonmetallic inorganic liquids), solvents, waste oil and sludge. Solvents and waste oils amounted to about 3,470 tons in 1987 and about 4,600 tons in 1988. These types of waste can be further reduced and treated prior to offsite disposal. A large portion of these wastes are now recycled.

In 1988 (last current information), Ventura County generated a relatively small proportion (about 21,000 tons) of the total hazardous waste generated in Southern California. That waste was taken to off-site disposal facilities outside of Ventura County where there continue to be problems with ground and surface water contamination and air quality.

As stated in the County Hazardous Waste Management Plan (CHWMP), hazardous waste treatment, transfer, disposal, recycling and incineration facilities are needed for Ventura County wastes. However, not all needed facilities will be located in Ventura County; therefore, the County supports the Joint Powers Agreement among the counties to support the siting of a facility which may serve more than one county's needs. In addition, the primary goal of Ventura County is the support of a Waste Reduction Policy (hierarchy) whereby hazardous waste is managed with first priority given to source reduction, followed by recycling, treatment, and lastly, disposal. The primary goal of hazardous waste management programs is to reduce the amount of hazardous wastes through recycling and on-site treatment to a point where off-site disposal is minimal.

Contaminated soils represented more than 1-1/2 times the total volume generated by industrial processes in 1986, and the contaminated soils accounted for approximately 52 percent (11,000 tons) of total hazardous waste volume in 1988 (last data). Contaminated soils are the result of hazardous waste site cleanup operations including underground tank leaks, abandoned sites and accidental spills, and releases of hazardous materials, industrial sites, waste sites, oil field sites (drilling muds, gas scrubber sludge and tank bottom solids), etc. Drilling muds, gas scrubber sludge and tank bottom solids volumes generated by oil and gas production significantly decreased in 1986 due to market conditions. ["Drilling muds" are dense colloidal slurries or gels that are circulated through well bores to facilitate oil and gas drilling. "Gas scrubber sludge" refers to the liquid or slushy waste remaining after wet gas is put through a water or chemical wash to remove impurities and debris such as silt and clay. "Tank bottoms" refer to clay and other solids that separate out of well fluid components. These solids contain mineral salts, organic compounds, and a fraction of dense, oil-based compounds.]

Hazardous materials being transported, stored and used include such toxic gases as Ammonia, Chlorine, Methyl Bromide, Sulfur Dioxide and Vikane. Hazardous liquids such as flammable petroleum products, toxic ethylene glycol and agricultural products are abundant. Flammable, toxic and/or reactive solids such as Ammonium Nitrate, metallic Sodium and pesticides can be found in all parts of Ventura County.

With regard to Household Hazardous Wastes (HHW), many areas of the "Tanner Plan" (Assembly Bill 2948, Tanner, 1986) were implemented in Ventura County by the 2000 deadline. Two "Antifreeze, Batteries, Oil and Paint" (ABOP) recycling centers were established in Ventura (Gold Coast) and Oxnard (Del Norte). A full HHW facility was permitted in Camarillo (MSE Environmental) and a full HHW facility opened in spring 2002 at the Ventura County Pollution Prevention Center. HHW collections are also held in Thousand Oaks and Simi Valley on a regular basis. Over seventy percent of the household hazardous waste collected at these sites is recycled.

In general, Public Health issues extend into many other areas identified throughout this document, including water quality and air quality. In this section however, the Public Health discussion focuses on other activities that might affect human health as a result of land use actions allowed pursuant to the proposed amendments. Such actions include activities that generate dust, create harborage for vectors, generate hazardous materials and/or waste and pathogens that may pose a substantial present, or potential, hazard to public health. Examples of possible projects that may be allowed pursuant to the proposed amendments include increased construction activities, housing and wastewater treatment facilities.

4.12.2 Impacts

Spills, leaks, accidents and collisions involving hazardous materials have taken place in virtually every part of Ventura County. Transportation, recreation, environmentally sensitive areas, business operations, tourism and the personal lives of the county's residents have all been impacted by the release of hazardous materials. In addition to potential health threats, the economic impacts associated with the cleanup of contaminated groundwater continue to escalate.

One example of how industrial chemicals can contaminate the environment, especially groundwater, occurred in Santa Clara County in 1981. Investigations began when a Northern California electronics firm excavated an area and noticed an unusual smell and color in the soil. It was found that a tank containing 1.1.1. -Trichloroethane (1.1.1.-TCA) was leaking. Further investigation revealed that the chemical had entered local domestic groundwater supplies at a concentration of 29 times the California Safe Drinking Water Standards of 200 parts per billion. The health impacts of 1.1.1.-TCA ingestion are damage to the central nervous system and to the cardiovascular system, loss of coordination, eye irritation and dizziness, depending on exposure. It was also found that the area served by the contaminated domestic water well also experienced a high rate of birth defects and miscarriages in the late 1970's and early 1980's. Accordingly, the California Department of Health Services (DHS) conducted two epidemiological studies of the link between birth defects and the contaminated drinking water. One study found three times the number of birth defects when compared to a control neighborhood. DHS officials concluded that the high incidence of birth defects was unlikely to be explained by chance alone. So far, Santa Clara County industries have spent over $80 million for site cleanup and improved storage facilities. These costs have continued to escalate as many more leaking storage tanks have been discovered.

In 1983, Ventura County officials found that 10,000 gallons of gasoline had leaked from seven underground storage tanks, and had contaminated groundwater supplies. The fact that one gallon of gasoline can contaminate one million gallons of drinking water to an unsafe level illustrates the extent of the problem and the need for rigorous monitoring of storage tanks.

A look at some of the other major incidents to take place in recent history in Ventura County is good illustration of the wide geographical impacts that are possible as a result of a release of hazardous materials:

- Chlorine gas release, Simi Valley, 1989 - Minor environmental damage. Several thousand people evacuated. Moderate disruption to business.
- Train Derailment, Seacliff, 1991 - Moderate environmental damage. Considerable property damage. Closure of major freeway and rail line systems.
- Cleanup of contamination, Rocketdyne - Santa Susanna, ongoing - Major environmental impacts.

- Crude oil spill, McGrath Lake, 1993
- Pipeline break, Piru, early 1990's

Considering the fact that all of the region's water comes from surface water or ground water sources and the demands on water continues, and as the County urbanizes further putting more people as recipients of that resource, the potential for exposure to contamination rises. Also, as the County urbanizes, the chance for business operations that produce hazardous materials and wastes increases, along with increased possibilities for spills from transport of materials though the County. The impacts from hazardous materials is relative to the County's population growth, job generation and transportation network.

Depending on the nature of a future specific development proposal, Public Health could be affected by potential exposure of humans to physical, biological or chemical impacts. This could either be as a result of placement of an activity too close to an existing hazard, or because of design and the type of activity involved. Potential impacts to Public Health are related to the project type, location and other environmental factors allowed pursuant to the proposed amendments such as road widening and waste treatment plants. The review processes in place via the zoning ordinance for land development activities require consistency with the General Plan and all applicable state and federal health requirements, which should minimize most project specific impacts, individually or cumulatively.

4.12.3 Mitigation Measures

The General Plan *Goals, Policies and Programs* contain the following policies:

2.15.2-1 *Hazardous wastes* and *hazardous materials* shall be managed in such a way that waste reduction through alternative technology is the first priority, followed by recycling and on-site treatment, with disposal as the last resort.

2.15.2-2 Site plans for *discretionary development* that will generate *hazardous wastes* or utilize *hazardous materials* shall include details on hazardous waste reduction, recycling and storage.

2.15.2-3 Any business that handles a *hazardous material* shall establish a plan for emergency response to a release or threatened release of a hazardous material. The County Fire Protection District is designated as the agency responsible for implementation of this policy.

2.15.2-4 Applicants shall provide a statement indicating the presence of any *hazardous wastes* on a site, prior to development. The applicant must demonstrate that the waste site is properly closed, or will be closed before the project is inaugurated.

2.15.2-5 Commercial or industrial uses which generate, store or handle *hazardous waste* and/or *hazardous materials* shall be located in compliance with the County Hazardous Waste Management Plan's siting criteria.

The Ventura County Board of Supervisors authorized preparation of the County Hazardous Waste Management Plan (CHWMP) in April 1986. That plan was prepared by the County and was subsequently approved by the Department of Health Services on January 8, 1990. Although many programs concerning hazardous waste management have been established, or were ongoing, they had not been addressed in one integrated plan. In Ventura County, the ten cities, Fire Departments, Sheriff, Police, California Highway Patrol and the County Environmental Health Division are each involved in hazardous waste management in some way through their response to emergency spills and illegal dumping. Given the many diverse programs under the responsibility of several different agencies and governmental entities, CHWMP was intended to coordinate all of these programs to minimize inconsistencies and to ensure that all issues are adequately addressed in one document.

The CHWMP's primary purpose is the topic of hazardous waste management. The intent of the Plan is to provide the public and decision makers with a document that contains information and policies for management of hazardous wastes Countywide. The Plan contains two documents. One is a technical document that presents information and background on the existing countywide programs for regulation and management of hazardous wastes, and it discusses the issues and problems. The

other volume is the actual Plan and Policy document that contains the recommended solutions, policies, implementation schedules, siting criteria and general areas for facilities developed as a result of the CHWMP planning effort.

Additionally, the Environmental Health Hazardous Materials Program is a CUPA. The CUPA is a single local agency designated by California Environmental Protection Agency as having regulatory authority for six environmental programs. These programs are Hazardous Waste, Hazardous Waste On-site Treatment, Spill Prevention Countermeasure Plan (aboveground tanks), Underground Storage Tanks, Hazardous Materials Business Plan and Inventory, and Risk Management Plan. The Ventura County CUPA enforces those programs throughout the County, except for the City of Oxnard. In addition to the CUPA Program, Ventura County Environmental Health Division staff responds whenever there is an accidental release of hazardous materials.

The Ventura County CUPA has two Participating Agencies (PA). The Ventura City Fire Department is a PA for Underground Storage Tank, Hazardous Materials Business Plan and Inventory, Risk Management Plan, and the Spill Prevention Countermeasure Control Plan programs. Santa Paula Fire Department is a PA for Hazardous Materials Business Plan and Inventory, Risk Management Plan and the Spill Prevention Countermeasure Control Plan programs.

The CUPA program also includes the Leaking Underground Fuel Tank (LUFT) Program that oversees cleanup of leaky underground tank sites under contract to the State Water Board.

Public Health concerns are to be addressed through the discretionary review process, and an environmental analysis of a proposed project. To accomplish this, a project would go through a preliminary assessment to review the project application, project description questionnaire and requested materials to determine if the project will cause adverse impacts to public health. Review is performed in a two step process: The first step is to determine if the project is in compliance with applicable State regulations, County ordinance or other guidelines and policies. The second step is to identify impacts that are not covered by existing regulations, but that have been included in recent data or industry recognized studies. The degree of impact is determined on case-by-case basis using current available information."

When a potentially significant impact is identified, mitigation measures that will be incorporated by project design, or imposition of a condition for adoption of mitigation measures that use currently acceptable technology to reduce the potential impact to a less than significant level, will be required. Mitigation measures will be developed on a case-by-case basis.

4.12.4 Residual Impact

The impact of future discretionary development on hazardous materials and waste and public health is potentially significant, but must be reviewed on a project-by-project basis because the impact is too speculative to be addressed at this time.

Imposing General Plan policies and Zoning Ordinance standards on future discretionary development can reduce the potential significant impacts from hazardous materials and waste and the environment to a level that is less-than-significant. As long as State and Federal public health standards are adhered to and discretionary development is reviewed for public health impacts and conditioned to avoid public health hazards, the impact to public health should be less than significant.

Although many measures are being taken to reduce cumulative household hazardous waste from ministerial residential development, the impact on public health still remains potentially significant.

4.13 Noise and Vibration

Noise is defined as any unwanted sound that is undesirable because it interferes with speech and hearing, or is intense enough to damage hearing, or is otherwise annoying. Because the effects of noise accumulate over time, it is necessary to deal not only with the intensity of sound but also the duration of human exposure to the sound.

A partial glossary of acoustic terminology can be found in the Ventura County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines and a more comprehensive glossary can be found in Section 2.16.2 of the *Hazards Appendix* of the General Plan.

Policy 2.16.2-1 of the *Goals, Policies and Programs* establishes the following threshold criteria; above which significant noise impacts would be anticipated:

(1) Noise sensitive uses proposed to be located near highways, truck routes, heavy industrial activities and other relatively continuous noise sources shall incorporate noise control measures so that:

   a. Indoor noise levels in habitable rooms do not exceed CNEL 45.

   b. Outdoor noise levels do not exceed CNEL 60 or L_{eq}1H of 65 dB(A) during any hour.

(2) Noise sensitive uses proposed to be located near railroads shall incorporate noise control measures so that:

   a. Guidelines a and b above are adhered to.

   b. Outdoor noise levels do not exceed L10 of 60 dB(A).

(3) Noise sensitive uses proposed to be located near airports:

   a. Shall be prohibited if they are in a CNEL 65 or greater, noise contour.

   b. Shall be permitted in the CNEL 60 to CNEL 65 noise contour area only if means will be taken to ensure interior noise levels of CNEL 45 or less.

(4) Noise generators proposed to be located near any noise sensitive use shall incorporate noise control measures so that outdoor noise levels at the noise receptor do not exceed:

   a. Leq1H of 55 dB(A) or ambient noise level plus 3 dB(A), whichever is greater, during any hour from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

   b. Leq1H of 50 dB(A) or ambient noise level plus 3 dB(A), whichever is greater, during any hour from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

   c. Leq1H of 45 dB(A) or ambient noise level plus 3 dB(A), whichever is greater, during any hour from 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.

   This standard is not applicable to increased traffic noise along any of the roads identified within the 2010 Regional Roadway Network (Figure 4.2.3) of the Public Facilities Appendix of the Ventura County General Plan. In addition, State and federal highways, all railroad line operations, aircraft in flight, and public utility facilities are noise generators having Federal and State regulations that preempt local regulations.

4.13.1 Environmental Setting

The existing noise environment is described in the proposed General Plan *Hazards Appendix*, Section 2.16. This Section includes the subsections that describe the most significant noise sources in the County, typical noise-sensitive uses in the County, and the method of calculation of traffic noise contours. Section 2.16 also provides an inventory of existing conflicts between noise generators, especially highways, and existing noise-sensitive uses.

The most significant noise sources in the County are motor vehicle traffic, aircraft, railroad traffic, industrial operations (particularly sand and gravel quarries), and agricultural operations.

The County Planning Division is proposing the adoption of new standards for noise generated during construction. While standards have been applied in the past for specific types of noise generating activities, such as mining and oil extraction, the County's ordinances have been silent on other types of noise generating activities, including those short-term impacts perpetrated by construction activities. The Planning Division is proposing new construction noise standards that would apply to both public sector and private sector projects. These standards would establish thresholds and processes to determine impacts of projects, and require mitigation measures to diminish the most significant of those impacts.

4.13.2 Impacts

Increases in noise levels between the present and the year 2020 will be caused primarily by increases in traffic levels. The tables at the end of Section 2.16 of the *Hazards Appendix* provide a complete inventory of 2020 noise contours for all County roadways that will exceed 3000 ADT (the level beyond which noise is likely to be a problem) in 2020. These tables were used in conjunction with land use designations of the Area Plans and "existing communities" to identify 2020 traffic noise, based on the assumption that noise-sensitive uses are most likely to be located in one of these two types of geographical areas. The results of this analysis are presented in the table below. In addition, a map showing Countywide 2020 noise contours is included at the end of this section (see Figure 4.13-1).

The roadway segments listed in the table below are adjacent to existing communities that are developed to urban and rural residential densities. The table summarizes the impacts of the 2020 noise contours (as calculated by the County's noise consultant) on such existing development. The noise-sensitive uses in the right-hand column can be expected to experience higher noise levels. (e.g., from 55-60 dB to +/-65 dB).

Roadway Segment	2020 ADT	Uses Impacted	CNEL Range
Kanan Rd., No. of County Line	27,000	Several homes on both sides of road for 5 Or 6 blocks along the road	66-68
La Luna Ave., So. of Lomita Ave.	5,000	Homes on La Luna Ave.	56-66
Santa Ana Rd. at Santa Ana Blvd.	5,000	Mobilehomes at corner of Santa Ana and Burnham Roads	60-65
Main St., Piru, No. of Camulos St.	5,000	Residences along both sides of Main St.	62-64
Wendy Drive So. Of U.S. 101	21,000	Numerous SF. dwellings on both sides of Wendy Dr.	55-70
Telegraph Rd., West Santa Paula Community	8,000	SF dwellings on Telegraph Rd.	64-66
Lewis Rd., Somis, between North and Rice Streets	18,000	Dwellings on both sides of Lewis Rd.	67-69
Ventura Ave., Holt St. area	15,000	Homes on sides of Ventura Ave.	65-67
Camino Dos Rios	9,000	Several homes on both sides of road	63-68
U. S. 101 At Lynn Ranch Community	200,000	Several homes on Calle Arroyo	67-69
Santa Susana Pass Rd. at Clear Spring Rd. (So. Side)	5,000	Homes	66-70
Rt. 33, near Holt St. area	26,000	Mobilehomes on East side	65-74

Roadway Segment	2020 ADT	Uses Impacted	CNEL Range
Rt. 33 No. of Casitas Vista Rd., to Rt. 150	24,000	Homes In Casitas Springs and between Santa Ana Blvd. and Encino Dr.; Oak View Library; Mobilehomes On West side just So. of Rt. 150	70-73
Rt. 33 So. of Canada Larga Rd.	26,000	Homes on West side of Norway Dr.	62-70
U.S. 101 between City Limits of San Buenaventura And Santa Barbara County Line	91,000	Small single-family and communities at Solimar Beach, Sea Cliff, Mussel Shoals and La Conchita	71-76
Central Ave. between Rose Ave. and Vineyard Ave.	4,000	Rio Mesa High School; several homes on Northeast side, just So. of Vineyard	64-65
Rt. 1, So. Coast, near Los Angeles County Line	12,000	Single-family and multi-Family development	61-72
Rt. 1 between Wood Rd. and Las Posas Rd.	13,000	NBVC Base housing	62-64
Santa Rosa Rd. E. of Yucca Dr.	19,000	Small pockets of single-development at Yucca Dr., Holiday Pines Lane, Charisma Court and Pradera Lane	56-66
Santa Clara Ave. So. of Friedrich	20,000	Several Homes On East Side, South Of Friedrich	66-68
Rose Ave. No. of U.S. 101	18,000	Several homes on West side; Junior High School on East side	61-66
Vineyard Ave. No. of U.S. 101	23,000	Homes on East side In El Rio area	69-71
Victoria Ave., just No. of U. S. 101	60,000	Several homes on East side	75-80

The following roadway segments will tend to become noisier as 2020 approaches. The segments have vacant lands adjacent to them that could develop at urban or rural densities pursuant to adopted plans and/or zoning.

La Luna Ave., south of Lomita Avenue (RE, RE-20, RE-1ac, RE-2ac).

- Main Street, Piru; east side, south of railroad (RPD-6U).
- The eastern portion of Santa Rosa Road (designated Rural).
- The Somis area, near the junction of Lewis Road and Highway 118 (designated “Existing Community”).
- Kanan Road, east of Thousand Oaks city limits. Note, however, that plans already submitted for this area incorporate sound-attenuating measures such as earth berms, masonry walls and increased building setbacks.

Widening roads of the Regional Road Network could exacerbate the noise impact on existing noise-sensitive land uses (e.g., residences) by moving the travel lanes closer to noise-sensitive uses and accommodating the increased traffic. However, not widening the road would result in stop and go traffic conditions that would increase noise from vehicle accelerating and braking. According to Dr. Marlund Hale, the County’s Noise Consultant for this GP update, the relative differences of noise impacts from widening vs. not widening roads is not significant.

Discretionary and ministerial development (e.g., agricultural land uses) allowed under existing land use plans and zoning ordinances could generate significant noise that could impact existing or planned noise-sensitive land uses during construction and operation of the new facilities and land uses. In addition, discretionary and ministerial (e.g., single-family dwellings on existing parcels) could be impacted by existing or future noise-generating land uses.

The proposed construction noise standards would require that both public and private sector projects meet new threshold criteria when undertaking construction projects. However, these noise thresholds would be higher than those previously used in determining the “significant” impacts of construction noise and, thus, are regarded as having potentially significant short-term noise impact on noise sensitive land uses as a result of these policy changes.

4.13.3 Mitigation Measures

The General Plan *Goals, Policies and Programs* contain the following existing policy:

2.16.2-2 Discretionary development which would be impacted by noise or generate project related noise which cannot be reduced to meet the above standards (*see policy 2.16.2-1 above*), shall be prohibited. This policy does not apply to noise generated during the construction phase of a project if a statement of overriding considerations is adopted by the decision-making body in conjunction with the certification of a final Environmental Impact Report.

The following mitigation measures are discussed in the Noise Chapter of the *Hazards Appendix* (Section 2.16.9):

- Maximize separation of industrial and residential uses. This is feasible for future development, through the area plan or subdivision review process.
- Maximize separation of residential uses and truck routes. This is also feasible for future development, but may not be feasible in terms of existing development patterns. With regard to the latter, the only way to achieve separation is to reroute truck traffic to avoid residential areas. This will generally involve considerable expenditure for new roadways, or extensive modifications to existing roadways that are upgraded to accept the rerouted traffic.
- Restrict trucking hours through existing residential areas. This measure has low feasibly, since it would necessitate, for example, an elaborate system of signs and, in effect, a "re-education" of all truck drivers using the designated routes. Furthermore, given the usage patterns of homes, it is likely that truck traffic would be an annoyance at any part of the day.
- Minimize stop signs and signals along truck routes through residential areas, but enforce a speed limit of 35-40 mph in such areas. This measure has low feasibility in terms of existing development, since the elimination of existing stop signs and signals would necessitate radical changes to existing circulation patterns. However, the measure has high feasibility in terms of future development.
- Lobby for enforcement of vehicle noise emission codes. This measure may not be feasible, as it would require an additional allocation of staff time for the lobbying effort.
- Restrict operation of industrial facilities to hours that are compatible with sleep patterns of nearby residential areas. This is already being implemented in terms of mining and for operations involving the extraction of fossil fuels, by means of ordinance requirements and standard permit conditions. This measure can be implemented for future development by means of permit conditions.
- Require that an acoustical site analysis and noise control specification be undertaken for noise-sensitive projects located within the CNEL 60 or 65 contour of any roadway, railroad, airport or industrial use. This is highly feasible, since it can be implemented as part of discretionary projects.

Additional mitigation measures are available at the site design level; for example:

- Use of non-noise-sensitive buildings as barriers (e.g., commercial or industrial buildings, garages, and carports) between noise-generators and noise-sensitive uses.
- Extending building setbacks (from noise generators), and placing parks, parking lots, etc. in the intervening spaces.
- Orienting buildings to take advantage of natural barriers.
- Grouping noise generators into areas that are acoustically isolated by hills, tall buildings, etc.
- Installation of a concrete barrier on top of an earth berm. This is one of the most effective methods of screening highway noise, in terms of both noise reduction and cost.
- Acoustic building construction, e.g., increased wall thickens, wider stud spacing and dual-paned windows.

All of the mitigation measures listed immediately above are feasible and can be implemented as part of the discretionary project approval process. Therefore, noise impacts from and to discretionary development would be mitigated to a less-than-significant level. The above mitigation measures, however, do not apply to ministerial noise-sensitive land uses (e.g., single-family dwellings) and noise-generating land uses (e.g., agricultural facilities and operations) and remain potentially significant.

Existing residential areas located near major State highways or County roads will be significantly impacted by increased traffic noise, irrespective of whether or not the roadway is widened and the number of traffic lanes is increased. Road widening projects would evaluate noise-impacts on adjacent noise-sensitive land uses and could incorporate measures (e.g., walls, berms) to reduce the noise impacts. The feasibility of these measures is not known at this time and must be considered potentially significant.

Mitigation measures are also included in the proposed Construction Noise Standards to help reduce the highest levels of noise generated from those relatively short term projects. However, since the threshold standards are greater than the current General Plan criteria, the short-term impact is considered significant.

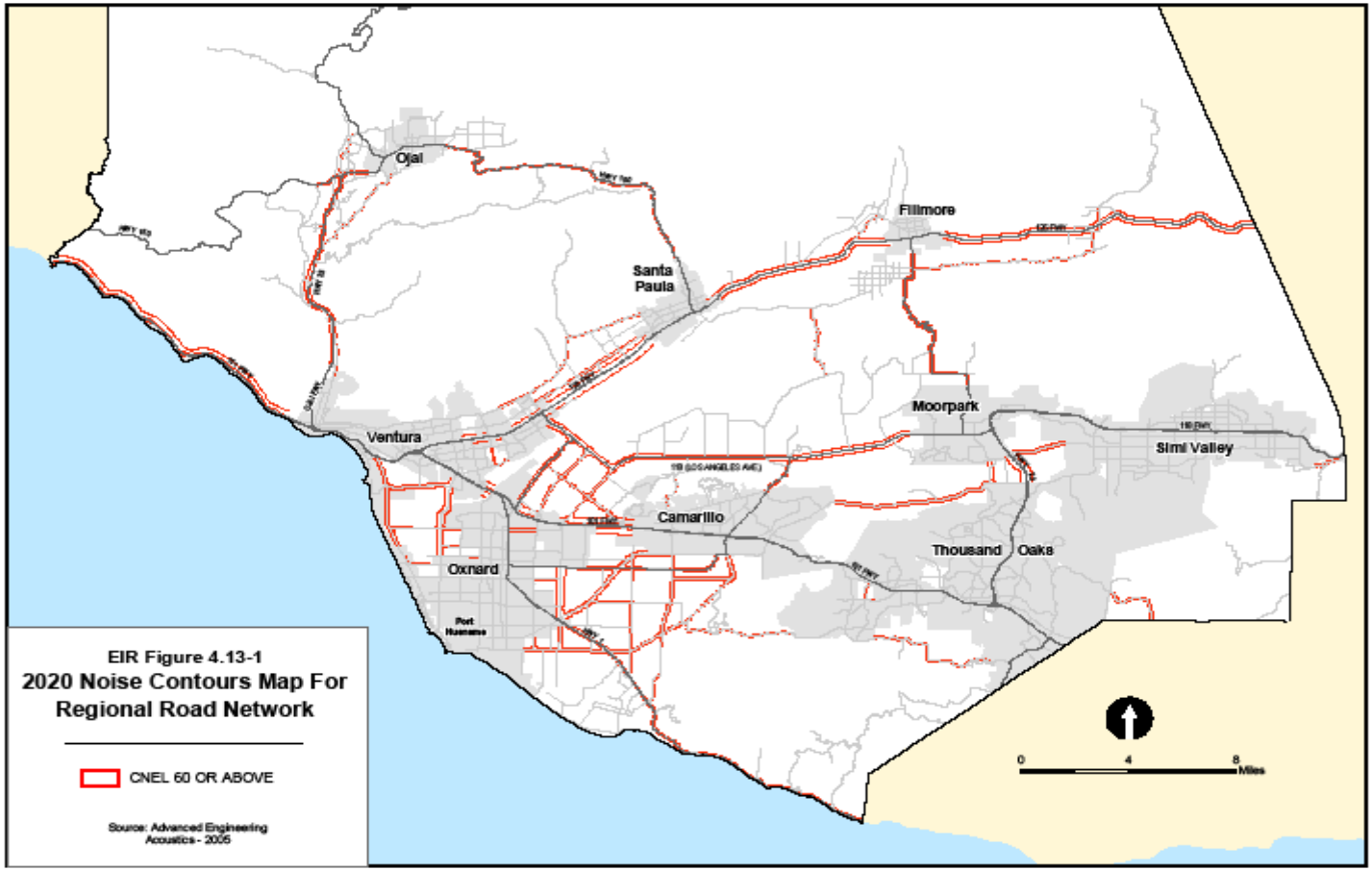
4.13.4 Residual Impact

The impact of noise from future discretionary development is potentially significant, but must be reviewed and mitigated on a project-by-project basis because the impact is too speculative to be addressed at this time. Imposing General Plan policies and Zoning Ordinance standards on future discretionary development will substantially reduce the potential significant impacts from noise, be it as a receptor or a generator.

Ministerial noise-sensitive and noise-generating land uses could be significantly impacted by or impact other land uses.

Construction related noise, when compared to the existing thresholds, will result in significant short-term noise impacts on noise-sensitive land uses.

Figure 4.13-1
2020 Noise Contours Map for Regional Road Network



4.14 Transportation/Circulation

This section addresses the project and cumulative impacts related to the following topics:

- level of service (LOS) of public roads,
- safety/design of public and private roads,
- tactical emergency access,
- pedestrian and bicycle facilities,
- off-street parking,
- bus transit,
- railroads,
- harbors, and
- pipelines.

Airports and airport hazards are addressed in section 4.15 of this EIR.

The County *Initial Study Assessment Guidelines* specify the threshold criteria for each of these topics. The following is a summary of those criteria:

Level of Service (LOS) of Public Roads

Level of Service (LOS) is a term that provides a qualitative description of operating performance of a road or intersection based on traffic conditions regarding speed, travel time, freedom to maneuver; traffic interruptions and motorist's perceptions (see EIR Figure 4.14-1). The levels range from LOS "A" (free flow conditions) to "F" (jammed conditions). The *Goals, Policies and Programs* of the County General Plan include the following traffic policies:

4.2.2-3. The minimum acceptable *Level of Service (LOS)* for road segments and intersections within the *Regional Road Network* and *Local Road Network* shall be as follows:

(a) *LOS-'D'* for all *County thoroughfares* and *Federal highways* and *State highways* in the unincorporated area of the County, except as otherwise provided in subparagraph (b);

(b) *LOS-'E'* for State Route 33 between the northerly end of the Ojai Freeway and the City of Ojai;

(c) *LOS-'C'* for all County-maintained *local roads*; and

(d) The *LOS* prescribed by the applicable city for all *Federal highways, State highways, city thoroughfares* and city-maintained *local roads* located within that city, if the city has formally adopted General Plan policies, ordinances, or a reciprocal agreement with the County (similar to Policies 4.2.2-3 through 4.2.2-6) respecting *development* in the city that would individually or cumulatively affect the *LOS* of *Federal highways, State highways, County thoroughfares* and County-maintained *local roads* in the unincorporated area of the County.

At any intersection between two roads, each of which has a prescribed minimum acceptable *LOS*, the lower *LOS* of the two shall be the minimum acceptable *LOS* for that intersection.

4.2.2-4. County General Plan land use designation changes and zone changes (and *discretionary development* governed by the *Ojai Area Plan*) shall be evaluated for their individual and cumulative impacts, and *discretionary development* shall be evaluated for its individual impact, on existing and future roads, with special emphasis on the following:

(a) Whether the project would cause existing roads within the *Regional Road Network* or *Local Road Network* that are currently functioning at an acceptable *LOS* to function below an acceptable *LOS*;

(b) Whether the project would worsen traffic conditions on existing roads within the *Regional Road Network* or the *Local Road Network* that are currently functioning below an acceptable *LOS*; and

(c) Whether the project could cause future roads planned for addition to the *Regional Road Network* or the *Local Road Network* to function below an acceptable *LOS*.

4.2.2-5. ….General Plan land use designation changes and zone changes (and *discretionary development* governed by the *Ojai Area Plan*) that would cumulatively cause any of the impacts identified in subparagraphs (a) through (c) of Policy 4.2.2-4 shall be prohibited unless the Board of Supervisors adopts a Statement of Overriding Consideration. County General Plan land use designation changes, zone changes and *discretionary development* that would individually cause any of the impacts identified in subparagraphs (a) through (c) of Policy 4.2.2-4 shall be prohibited unless feasible mitigation measures are adopted which would ensure that the impact does not occur or unless a project completion schedule and full funding commitment for road improvements are adopted which ensure that the impact will be eliminated within a reasonable period of time. …

The County Public Works Agency has adopted standard methodology guidelines that covers this issue in more detail (County *Initial Study Assessment Guidelines* – section 22.a(1)). Generally, any project that would cause an existing or planned road to fall below its LOS standard, or add one or more peak-hour trips to a road that is already operating at below its LOS standard, is considered as having a significant impact.

Safety and Design of Public and Private Roads

Most development projects affect the public road system through accessing, improving or widening existing roads, and/or constructing new roads. Projects that access, improve or widen roads in accordance with the *County Road Standards* and VCFPD *Private Road Guidelines* generally have a less-than-significant impact on the safety and design of the public and private road system. Project impacts on intersections that exceed applicable State traffic signal warrants are considered significant.

Tactical Emergency Access

Tactical access is an organized system of roads and driveways to and from a project utilized in the event of any emergency or disaster. Access roads may be impaired by vehicle congestion, condition of terrain, climatic conditions or other factors.

The Fire Protection District has adopted *Private Road Guidelines* that are in concert with State Fire Safe Guidelines. Typically, new subdivisions of land that would create lots to be served by a single direction road (cul-de-sac) that exceeds 800 feet in length would be considered as having deficient tactical access. By providing a second access route, the project's impact can be changed to less than significant. Other factors considered by the Fire Protection District in determining whether or not second access should be required include:

- Road design (width, gradient, etc.).
- High Fire Hazard area.
- Structures provided with fire sprinklers.

Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities

If the project includes new sidewalks and roadway pavement widths sufficient to accommodate pedestrian/bicycle traffic in accordance with the current *County Road Standards*, the project will have a less than significant impact. Bicycling on public roads within residential subdivisions and neighborhoods is generally regarded as safe and adequate, if the roads meet the *County Road Standards*.

A project that will cause actual or potential barriers or increase the potential for vehicle – pedestrian/bicycle conflicts on existing or planned pedestrian/bicycle facilities may have a significant impact. Projects that generate or attract pedestrian/bicycle traffic volumes meeting requirements for protected highway crossings or pedestrian and bicycle facilities may have a significant impact. Pedestrian over-crossings, traffic signals and bikeways are examples of these types of facilities.

Off-Street Parking

Any project that generates additional vehicle trips during the construction or operation phases would have an impact on off-street parking. For the *construction phase*, if there is sufficient space on-site to park construction vehicles, then the project would have a less-than-significant impact. Conversely, if there would not be sufficient space on-site to accommodate construction vehicles, then the significance must be determined on a case-by-case basis. For the *operation phase*, if the project includes parking that meets the Zoning Ordinance requirements, then the project would have a less-than-significant impact. Conversely, if the project does not meet the Zoning Ordinance parking requirements, then significance must be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Bus Transit

A project will normally have a significant impact on bus transit if it would substantially interfere with existing bus transit facilities or routes, or if it would create a substantial demand for new or additional bus transit facilities/services.

Railroads

A project will normally have a significant impact on a railroad if it would substantially interfere with an existing railroad's facilities or operations.

Harbors

This issue entails direct or indirect impacts to the operations or facilities of a harbor, and the demand for new or expanded facilities.

Pipelines

Pipelines mean conduits of pipe for the transportation of petroleum, petroleum products, natural gas, etc. A project would have a significant impact if it would substantially interfere with, or affect the operations of, an existing pipeline.

4.14.1 Environmental Setting

State Government Code Sections 65070 – 65086.5 sets forth the framework for integrated state and regional transportation planning and improvement programming. The major State and regional agencies involved in transportation planning and improvement include the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs)/councils of governments (COGs) [e.g., SCAG], regional transportation planning agencies (e.g., Ventura County Transportation Commission [VCTC]).

Caltrans is responsible for preparing and updating the State Transportation Plan. SCAG, in conjunction with the county regional transportation planning agencies, is responsible for preparing and updating the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for the SCAG region. VCTC is Ventura County's regional transportation planning agency and is, responsible for the preparation of the County Congestion Management Plan, Comprehensive Land Use Plan for Airports, regional public transit planning and coordination, and establishing countywide transportation improvement funding priorities.

The transportation and circulation elements of the city and county general plans are required to coordinate the jurisdiction's transportation and circulation facilities (e.g., roads, transit, airports) with the regional transportation plans.

To better understand the existing environment as it relates to the transportation/circulation topics listed above, the following background information is provided:

Level of Service (LOS) of Public Roads

The Ventura County Regional Road Network consists of Federal highways, State highways, County thoroughfares, city thoroughfares, and reserved rights-of-way as shown on Figure 4 of the *Goals, Policies and Programs* and Figures 4.2.1 and 4.2.3 of the *Public Facilities and Services Appendix* of the County General Plan. The Local Road Network consists of County-maintained local roads and city-maintained local roads.

The existing unincorporated Regional Road Network consists of 250 miles of County-maintained thoroughfares and 269 miles of State maintained freeways, expressways and conventional highways. There are about 542 miles total in the County Road System, which includes all roads accepted by the Board of Supervisors into the County maintained Road System, but which does not include state highways, private roads, or city streets. Proposed Figure 4.2.1 of the *Public Facilities and Services Appendix* depicts the current number of travel lanes and traffic of each of the roadways of the Regional Road Network (as amended) in the unincorporated area.

(http://www.ventura.org/planning/programs_services/gen_plan_update/focus_gen_plan_update.htm)

County thoroughfares and conventional *State highways* in the unincorporated area are classified as Class I, II, or III roadways. Class I roadways are rural two-lane or multi-lane roads of essentially level terrain, where the road section has been improved to meet current road standard criteria; Class II roadways are rural two-lane roads, of essentially level and slightly rolling terrain, where the road section does not meet current road standard criteria; and Class III roadways are rural two-lane roads, of mountainous terrain or sharply curving alignment, where the road section does not meet current road standard criteria.

The ADT and LOS "planning" thresholds for Class I, II and III roadways and Federal and State freeways are shown on Figure 4.2.2 of the *Public Facilities and Services Appendix* of the General Plan (see EIR Figure 4.14-2).

Based on the information depicted in proposed Figures 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 of the *Public Facilities and Services Appendix*, the following unincorporated road segments *may* be currently operating at below an adequate level of service:

- Hwy 101 between Ventura city limits and Oxnard city limits (LOS F)
- Hwy 101 between Oxnard city limits and Camarillo city limits (LOS F)
- Hwy 23 between Moorpark city limits and Pasadena Ave (LOS E)*
- Hwy 33 between Casitas Vista Road and ~~Hwy 150~~ Oak View (LOS F)
- Hwy 118 between Hwy 232 and Santa Clara Ave (LOS E)*
- Highway 118 between Highway 34 and Moorpark city limits (LOS E)
- Central Ave. between Santa Clara Ave and City of Camarillo (LOS E)*
- Channel Island Blvd between Oxnard city limits to Rice Ave (LOS E)*
- Harbor Blvd between West Fifth St and Olivas Park Dr (LOS E)*
- Las Posas Rd between Fifth St and Camarillo city limits (LOS E)*
- Santa Rosa Rd between Camarillo city limits and Moorpark Rd (LOS E)*

The above information is based on the "planning" thresholds of the General Plan. In order to determine if a particular road segment is actually operating at a less-than-adequate LOS, additional traffic studies are necessary. Those road segments listed above with an asterisk (*) need to studied further in order to determine if the LOS is actually below General Plan standards. These studies are beyond the scope of this EIR.

VCTC is responsible for establishing policies and approving priorities for Federal and State funding allocations for the regional road network within Ventura County. As such, VCTC is primarily

responsible for funding and Caltrans is responsible for designing and constructing improvements to the Federal and State highways within Ventura County.

VCTC is also responsible for preparing and updating the County's Congestion Management Plan (CMP). The CMP establishes minimum LOS standards for regional roads and sets forth the process whereby VCTC monitors the traffic conditions over time, informs cities and the county if regional roads within their jurisdiction fall below acceptable LOS standards, and monitors city and county Deficiency Plans for the improvement of congested roads. VCTC has the authority to withhold gas tax revenues to cities and the county if they fail to comply with the requirements of the CMP. State law requires that the CMP establish LOS standards, but does not allow LOS F.

The Ventura County Board of Supervisors is responsible for overseeing the improvement of the County roads, which are part of the regional road network in the unincorporated area of the County. In 1994, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors adopted the Traffic Impact Mitigation Fee (TIMF) Ordinance and Program Engineering Report. The 1994 TIMF Program prorated the costs of improving the County roads of the Regional Road Network to the residential, commercial and industrial land uses forecasted by the County General Plan to the year 2010. Because State law requires that local fees not exceed a project's prorate share of the cost of public facility improvements and only 10 percent of the future County growth is forecasted to occur within the unincorporated area, the TIMF was not sufficient to make all necessary improvements to the Regional Road Network. It also assumed regional federal and state funding would be available at approximately the same rate as in previous years. In 2001, the TIMF was substantially amended to apportion costs by sub-region, extend the traffic forecasts to 2020, and to persuade the cities to enter into reciprocal traffic fee agreements whereby development within a given sub-region would mitigate their traffic impacts on unincorporated area roadways by paying county traffic fees in addition to city traffic fees where applicable. Although some cities have tentatively agreed to this arrangement, several cities have not and the improvements remain under-funded.

Safety/Design of Public and Private Roads

Many regional and local roads were constructed prior to adoption of the County's *Public Road Standards* or VCFPD *Private Road Guidelines* and may not meet the current design or construction standards. A road may be "substandard" for any number of reasons, including right-of-way width, shoulder area, curve radius, gradient, etc.

A substandard road does not necessarily mean that the road is hazardous if used with due care in a manner in which it is reasonably foreseeable that it will be used. The history of accidents along a given stretch of public road during various times of the day and variable weather conditions, considering the volume and character of traffic on this roadway in comparison to similar roadways in other jurisdictions, is a primary measure of whether a public road is hazardous. The Highway Safety Act of 1966 (Title 23 USC 402) gave rise development of the California Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS). The SWITRS data base is maintained by the California Highway Patrol. This data is available on a confidential basis to the County Public Works Agency and other agencies having jurisdiction over highways. Using data provided by SWITRS, Caltrans developed and maintains the Traffic Accident Surveillance and Analysis System (TASAS) to further analyze accident data on state highway segments. The County PWA, using data from the SWITRS data base, and specialized software, can similarly evaluate accident statistics on all reported traffic accidents in the unincorporated area of the County.

Three elements are considered in accident analysis: the driver, the vehicle, and its related environment. The primary collision factor in almost all traffic accidents are driver error driver inattention, driver impairment, speeding or other Vehicle Code violations. The areas of the County that contain a substantial number of substandard public and private roads include Box Canyon, private beach communities along the north coast, Home Acres, Matilija Canyon, Mission Rock Road, North Fork Springs, Santa Susanna Knolls, Summit and Ventu Park.

Tactical Emergency Access

Properties that are served with cul-de-sacs (roads that connect to only one other road) that exceed 800 feet in length and road systems that come back to a single access point are considered deficient

for tactical emergency access. If the road is blocked for any reason, there is no alterative means ingress or egress. This is especially critical in emergency situations such as brush fires where residents need to evacuate and fire response vehicles need to enter an area.

Many existing communities developed before the 1960s are served by private or public streets that do not meet the Fire Protection District's standards for tactical emergency access.

Pedestrian/Bicycle Access

Pedestrian access includes sidewalks and crosswalks at street intersections or mid-block points. In addition, pedestrian access can be accommodated in association with bikeways (see below). Pedestrian over- or under-passes across major street arterials are occasionally used in major urban areas, but none exist within the unincorporated area of Ventura County.

Bicycling on public roads within residential subdivisions and neighborhoods is generally regarded as safe and adequate, if the roads meet the *County Roads Standards*. Along major streets and in more urban areas, more formal bicycle paths (bikeways) may be established. These bikeways are classified as follows:

***Class I Bikeway**:* A bike path or trail within a completely separated right-of-way designated for the exclusive use of bicycles and pedestrians with cross flows by motorists minimized.

Class II Bikeway: A bike lane within a restricted road right-of-way designated for the exclusive or semi-exclusive use of bicycles with through travel by motor vehicles or pedestrians prohibited, but with vehicle parking and cross flows by pedestrians and motorists permitted.

Class III Bikeway: A bike route within a road right-of-way designated by signs or permanent markings and shared with pedestrians or motorists.

In Ventura County, rural residential areas, urban residential communities built prior to the 1950s, and industrial areas generally lack sidewalks, thereby forcing pedestrians to walk within the public and private streets. Likewise, residential areas and communities built prior to the 1950s contain narrow public or private streets that do not provide for safe bicycle access. Virtually all urban commercial areas and residential tracts approved during the 1960's and later were required to construct sidewalks and streets within a dedicated public right-of-way.

Due to high land and construction costs, there are few Class I or II bikeways within the unincorporated area of Ventura County. Moreover, the few Class III bikeways that exist are located primarily in unincorporated communities that were constructed since the 1970s (e.g., Oak Park), although in recent years federal funding has been used to construct Class III bikeways on Central Avenue and Cawelti Road. PWA intends to continue to improve existing roadways by adding or widening existing paved road shoulders, where feasible and contingent on the availability of funding.

Because of the distances involved, pedestrian and bicycle modes of transportation are not regarded as feasible alternatives to auto and mass transit for inter-city travel. Hiking and biking trails outside of urban areas are regarded as a recreational use, rather than an alternative mode of transportation, and are discussed in Section 4.21-Recreational Facilities. Nonetheless, the Class I and II bikeways in the unincorporated area of Ventura County include the following:

Victoria Bikeway - This bikeway was constructed in the mid-1970's. A Class I bike path parallels Victoria Avenue from Olivas Park Drive to Gonzales Road, and a Class II bike lane is available for bicyclists from Gonzales Road to Channel Islands Boulevard.

Harbor Boulevard Bike Lane - This coastal Class II bikeway has been striped along Harbor Boulevard based on the availability of local funding. As a link between projects in Oxnard and Ventura, the County constructed a bicycle bridge over the Santa Clara River to provide safe travel between the two cities.

Ojai Valley Trail - This is a 9.5-mile by 50-foot multi-purpose Class I trail utilizes the abandoned Southern Pacific Railroad right-of-way from the City of Ojai to Foster Park. A split-rail fence separates the horses from the pedestrians and bicyclists. One side of the trail is paved with

asphalt for bicyclists, and the other with wood chips and gravel, a more suitable roadbed for horses.

Santa Paula Branch Line Bike Trail – This is a planned 32-mile Class I bike trail from Ventura to Santa Clarita. The alignment is generally along the old Southern Pacific Railroad right-of-way. There is an existing portion in the City of Fillmore. The portion of the trail in the City of Santa Paula is currently being designed, and construction is anticipated to begin in late 2004 or early 2005. The trail is a combination of Class I and Class II trail, about 8-12 feet wide.

The County General Plan's *Goals, Policies and Programs* contains no goals, policies or programs to improve pedestrian or bicycle access in older, substandard residential neighborhoods or communities. The County Board of Supervisors "conceptually" approved the *Regional Trails and Pathways Plan* on June 27, 1995, but deferred action on the future of the program. Subsequent actions by the Board resulted in discontinuing funding for regional trails programs including eliminating full time staff support, and adoption of a policy statement that the County will not use its power of eminent domain to acquire lands for recreational trail development.

VCTC also approved in concept a portion of the Regional Trails Plan as the "Regional Non-Motorized Transportation Plan" on November 4, 1994. This action was modified by VCTC on April 1, 1996, when the approved the portion of the Regional Trails Plan for bicycle travel called the "Ventura County Bikeways Plan". The Bikeways Plan was later incorporated into the Congestion Management Program (CMP).

As a consequence, the County has no formal plan for the development of hiking, biking or equestrian trails.

Although some of the Area Plans contain general goals, policies and programs to address pedestrian and bicycle access, these have been largely ineffectual in addressing existing deficiencies.

Off-Street Parking

Section 8108 et seeq. of the Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance and section 8176 et seeq. of the Coastal Zoning Ordinance set forth the off-street parking standards for new development and land uses. Existing non-conforming land uses are not allowed to expand unless the off-street parking is brought up to meet current standards.

Off-street parking during construction is largely unregulated.

Bus Transit

In Ventura County, there are several public and private bus transit operators. These are described below.

- South Coast Area Transit (SCAT) serves Ojai, Ventura, Oxnard, Port Hueneme and the unincorporated areas in between. Most bus routes run seven days a week (excluding major holidays). SCAT also provides Americans with Disabilities Act(ADA) complementary para-transit service in and between the cities and county unincorporated areas in the western portion of the county. The four cities and the county fund the service.
- Ventura Intercity Service Transit Authority (VISTA) provides a fixed route bus system countywide which connects the cities and communities' transit systems. VISTA is contracted to private operators, and also operates general public dial-a-ride systems in Fillmore/Piru and the Santa Paula area. The County and Cities of Camarillo, Fillmore, Moorpark, Oxnard, Santa Paula, Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks and Ventura fund VISTA.
- Camarillo Area Transit (CAT) serves the intra-city bus needs of the City of Camarillo by providing a fixed route and a general public dial-a-ride system.
- Moorpark Transit provides a fixed route within their city limits as well as a complementary ADA dial-a-ride system.
- The City of Ojai provides trolley service within their city and the nearby unincorporated areas of Meiners Oaks and Mira Monte.

- Simi Valley Transit operates in Simi Valley and Chatsworth by providing a fixed route and a complementary ADA dial-a-ride system.
- The Thousand Oaks Transit (TOT) serves Thousand Oaks, Newbury Park and Westlake Village with a fixed route and an ADA dial-a-ride system.
- Greyhound Bus Lines provides regular long distance travel service and stops at three cities in the County: Oxnard, Thousand Oaks and Ventura.
- Ventura County Airporter makes trips to Los Angeles International Airport. Intercity bus service is also provided to Ventura, Oxnard, and Thousand Oaks.
- All ten incorporated cities and all major Ventura County communities have a program to transport senior citizens to meal sites and to deliver meals to seniors. The Public Social Services Agency administers this program.
- The Senior Survivalmobile serves senior citizens countywide during medical emergencies, with the help of volunteers. The Public Social Services Agency administers this program.

Railroads

County railroad service includes Union Pacific Railroad, including passenger services by Amtrak, Metrolink and Fillmore and Western Railway, and Ventura County Railroad Company. Union Pacific owns and maintains major east-west rail lines connecting to Santa Barbara County and Los Angeles County, and operates freight train service daily. The Ventura County Railroad Company owns and maintains short rail lines that connect the Port of Hueneme and Naval Construction Battalion Base to the Union Pacific mainline in the City of Oxnard. Amtrak operates several passenger/commuter trains daily to and from Los Angeles County and Santa Barbara County. Metrolink operates commuter trains Monday through Friday from Montalvo to Los Angeles. The Fillmore and Western Railway operates tourist trains on the Santa Paula-Fillmore-Piru branch of the Union Pacific railroad.

Harbors

Ventura County has one deep water harbor (Port Hueneme) located in the City of Port Hueneme and two recreational harbors (Channel Island Harbor and Ventura Harbor) located in the cities of Oxnard and Ventura respectively.

Pipelines

Major pipelines within Ventura County carry crude oil and natural gas, generally along or underneath highways and railroad lines. Major oil companies, such as ARCO and Equilon, own these pipelines, and ownership changes from time to time. Most oil companies, which have operations in Ventura County, have pipelines located within their oil/gas lease areas, but do not operate major transporting pipelines. Four Corners Pipeline Company, a subsidiary of ARCO, is a private pipeline company regulated by the Public Utilities Commission that transports crude oil through their own lines and connects to other pipelines as needed. Four Corners Pipeline Company operates only their pipeline facilities, and does not own any crude oil. There is also an existing Southern California Edison fuel line originating within the Oxnard Harbor District which connects to the Ormond Beach Generating Station. Oil and Gas transport lines have been mapped on the County's Geographic Information System to allow improved response to spills in the event of pipeline system failure or a seismic event. Although available to emergency responders and planners, GIS information on the location of these transport lines is proprietary and contact must first be made with the California State Fire Marshall.

4.14.2 Impacts

Level of Service (LOS) of Public Roads

Future development allowed under the County General Plan and the general plans of the surrounding jurisdictions will result in significant increases in traffic.

In February of 1999, the Ventura Countywide Traffic Model (VCTM) was updated using the then latest population, dwelling unit and employment forecasts as adopted by the Ventura ~~County Association~~

Council of Governments (VCAOG) and the land use plans of the cities and the county. The firm of Austin-Foust Associates, Inc. developed the traffic model and the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) provided technical liaison with the cities, the Air Pollution Control District (APCD) and Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) to complete the assignment. A Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) was formed to advise the VCTC, and consisted of representatives from each city, the County, APCD and Caltrans. Appendix 8.3a is an excerpt from the Ventura County Traffic Impact Mitigation Fee Program Engineering Report (October 2001), which explains the VCTM in more detail.

In 2003, the County Public Works Agency hired the traffic firm of Katz, Okitsu & Associates to rerun the VCTM taking into account updated traffic information and several circulation alternatives (see section 5 – Alternatives of this EIR). The population, dwelling unit and employment 2020 forecast assumptions of the previous VCTM were compared to the latest VCOG-approved 2020 forecasts (2001) and were found to be very comparable. Therefore, these forecasts and land use assumptions were not updated as part of the VCTM rerun. The results of this rerunning of the VCTM are reflected in Appendix 8.3b of this EIR.

Based on the information in Appendix 8.3b of this EIR, the following unincorporated roadways may operate at a less than adequate LOS by the year 2020, assuming that no further improvements are made:

- Hwy 101 between Santa Barbara County line and Ventura city limits (LOS F)
- Hwy 101 between Ventura city limits and Oxnard city limits (LOS E)
- Hwy 101 between Oxnard city limits and Camarillo city limits (LOS F)
- Hwy 23 between Moorpark city limits and Fillmore city limits (LOS E)
- Hwy 33 between Casitas Vista Rd and Hwy 150 (LOS F)
- Hwy 33 between Ojai city limits and Santa Barbara County line (LOS E)
- Hwy 34 between Oxnard city limits and Camarillo city limits (LOS E)
- Hwy 34 between Camarillo city limits and Hwy 118 (LOS E)
- Hwy 118 between Ventura city limits and Hwy 34 (LOS E)
- Hwy 118 between Highway 34 and Moorpark city limits (LOS F)
- Hwy 150 between Ojai city limits and Santa Paula city limits (LOS E)
- Box Canyon Rd between Los Angeles Co line and Santa Susana Pass Rd (LOS E)
- Bristol Rd between Union Pacific RR and Ventura city limits (LOS E)
- Cawelti Rd between Las Posas Rd and Lewis Rd (LOS F)
- Central Ave. between Santa Clara Ave and City of Camarillo (LOS E)
- Channel Island Blvd between Oxnard city limits to Rice Ave (LOS E)
- Harbor Blvd between W. Fifth St and Olivas Park Dr (LOS E)
- Hueneme Rd between Oxnard city limits and Las Posas Rd (LOS E)
- Las Posas Rd between Hueneme Rd and Fifth St (LOS E)
- Las Posas Rd between Fifth St and Camarillo city limits (LOS F)
- Lewis Road between CSUCI entrance and Camarillo city limit (LOS F)
- Moorpark Rd between Santa Rosa Rd and Tierra Rejada Rd (LOS E)
- Olivas Park Dr between Telephone Rd and Seaborg Dr (LOS E)

- Pleasant Valley Rd between Oxnard city limits and Las Posas Rd (LOS F)
- Santa Clara Ave between Oxnard city limits to Hwy 118 (LOS E)
- Santa Rosa Rd between Camarillo city limits and Moorpark Rd (LOS E)
- Victoria Ave between Oxnard city limits and Gonzales Rd (LOS E)
- Victoria Ave between Gonzales Rd and Ventura city limits (LOS F)
- Wendy Dr between Borchard Rd and Thousand Oaks city limits (LOS E)

In addition, the Katz, Okitsu & Associates traffic model rerun analyzed the effect of Highway 101 being limited to a maximum of eight lanes within the cities of Thousand Oaks, Camarillo, Oxnard and Ventura. Although the Santa Clara River Bridge is planned for 10 lanes and the unincorporated area between Del Norte Avenue and Central Avenue could accommodate 10 lanes, the existing land uses within the respective cities would appear to make widening to 10-lanes financially infeasible (VCTC. *US 101 Feasibility Study*. 2003). Under this scenario, Highway 101 would operate at LOS E.

Additionally, Caltrans and the VCTC have performed a more detailed analysis of Hwy 23 from Thousand Oaks city limits to Moorpark city limits and concluded that the freeway should be increased from four lanes to six lanes. No additional right-of-way would be needed as the new lanes would be located within the existing median area.

If the Regional Road Network is not improved, and the County General Plan not amended to address the above roadway LOS deficiencies, the following significant adverse environmental and economic impacts would occur:

Traffic Level of Service - Decrease of traffic LOS to "E" resulting in unstable flow with lower operating speeds and major delays and stoppages, or LOS "F" resulting in forced flow operation with low speeds and stoppages for long periods due to congestion.

Public Safety - Increase in stop-and-go and slow traffic conditions resulting in increased driver frustration and traffic accidents, and an overall decrease in emergency response capabilities (police, fire, ambulance).

Energy – Slower traffic speeds will decrease the fuel efficiency of vehicles resulting in increased fuel consumption.

Air Quality - Decrease in the fuel efficiency of vehicles will result in increased air quality impacts in Ventura County, which is a non-attainment area;

Economic - Increase in travel time and/or vehicle miles traveled resulting in decreased worker productivity, delay in the transportation of goods and decrease in tourism, which will have a negative effect on the overall economy of Ventura County and act as a disincentive to future economic investment and growth.

The County General Plan transportation/circulation element would not be consistent or correlated with the land use element, which would be inconsistent with the requirements of State law and could expose the County to potential litigation.

Safety/Design of Public and Private Roads

All discretionary development must comply with the County's *Public Road Standards* or VC~~D~~FPD *Private Road Guidelines*, as applicable. In areas where the offsite access roads do not meet the County's standards, the necessity for off-site improvements is evaluated and the project is conditioned accordingly. In most instances, offsite improvements are made and the impact is alleviated. However, in some instances the scope and cost of offsite improvements may exceed the financial constraints of the project applicant. Therefore, either the project is not constructed or the applicant requests an exception, which requires a project EIR and statement of overriding considerations by the decision-making body.

Some Area Plans have attempted to address the issue of substandard roads in older neighborhoods. For instance, the Thousand Oaks Area Plan designated the Ventu Park area UR-4 (Urban Residential,

2-4 du/ac), but requires that the zoning remain RE-20,000 sq ft to prevent further subdivisions until such time as a mechanism has been established to improve the local traffic circulation system.

Ministerial development (single-family dwellings on legal lots) in areas with substandard public or private roads can cause a potentially significant cumulative impact.

Tactical Emergency Access

All discretionary development must comply with the County's tactical emergency access standards. In areas where the offsite access roads do not meet the County's standards, the necessity for off-site improvements is evaluated and the project is conditioned accordingly. Therefore, in most instances this does not result in a significant impact.

Ministerial development (single-family dwellings on legal lots) in areas with substandard public or private roads can cause a potentially significant cumulative impact.

Pedestrian/Bicycle Access

Pedestrian and bicycle access are increasing in importance as alternative transportation modes within existing and planned residential neighborhoods and urban communities. According to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the typical maximum feasible walking distance radius is ¼ mile and the typical maximum feasible to-work or to-school bicycling distance radius is 2 miles. Walking and bicycling, however, are generally not viable for inter-city travel because the distances are too great.

The County Subdivision Ordinance requires that subdivision maps be conditioned to dedicate sufficient public right-of-way and construct public streets and sidewalks within the subdivision. However, in older neighborhoods/communities that currently lack adequate sidewalks or sufficiently wide public streets, new development can increase the need for sidewalks and bike paths outside of the subdivision boundaries, especially to nearby schools and neighborhood commercial areas.

Under State law a subdivision can only be conditioned to pay for its proportional share of the cost of offsite improvements. An alternate funding mechanism is a benefit assessment district. However it is extremely difficult to get a sufficient percentage of the benefited residents or property owners to agree to assess them themselves for sidewalk, bike path or other improvements. As a consequence, these types of improvements in older neighborhoods/communities are generally not occurring. The Piru Redevelopment Agency has utilized some of its tax increment financing to make selected sidewalk improvements along Main Street and Center Street in the community of Piru, but there are insufficient funds to construct sidewalks in all existing residential areas in the Piru Community.

Therefore, as new development occurs within or adjacent to older neighborhoods and communities, the cumulative demand for pedestrian and bicycle access will increase. This is a potentially significant impact.

Off-Street Parking

Since new development is required to meet the off-street parking standards of the Coastal and Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinances, there is no significant impact. However, short-term parking impacts can occur during construction where temporary onsite parking may not be feasible (single-family detached lot). If the property is located in an area where the public or private streets are extremely narrow and not consistent with the *Public Roads Standards* or *Private Road Guidelines,* the resultant on-street parking may impede access to the neighboring properties and result in a significant public safety impact.

Bus Transit

As new urban residential, commercial and industrial development occurs, there will be an increase in the cumulative demand for bus service.

Railroads

Development in the unincorporated area of the County could potential impact the safe operation of freight and passenger trains utilizing the Union Pacific rail lines. Development adjacent to railroad right-of-way could potentially increase vandalism to rail facilities or result in increase accidents

involving persons trespassing on rail lines. Development that requires street access along public or private roads that have uncontrolled or substandard rail over-crossings also posses significant traffic safety impacts.

Harbors

Development in the unincorporated area of the County would have no direct impact on any of the existing harbors since the harbors are located within cities. Although unincorporated industrial development could potentially cause increased demand for seaborne transportation of goods or raw materials, the limited amount of industrial zoned land in the unincorporated area would not result in a significant impact. Likewise, unincorporated residential development could potentially cause an increase in demand for recreational boating, however, the limited amount of residential zoned land in the unincorporated area would not result in a significant impact.

Development within the cities or the surrounding region could have a potential significant cumulative demand for seaborne transportation and recreational boating facilities. However, the respective harbor districts are planning for increased harbor facilities and the demand could be met by harbor facilities in Santa Barbara or Los Angeles County. Therefore, the impact on harbors in Ventura County is not regarded as significant.

Pipelines

Development constructed over or adjacent to pipelines can significantly damage the pipelines or pose significant health and safety risks. This is a potentially significant impact.

4.14.3 Mitigation Measures

Level of Service (LOS) of Public Roads

To mitigate the adverse impacts on the Regional Road Network that could occur as a result from development and growth allowed under the County General Plan and city general plans, the Regional Road Network must be improved.

Both the State of California and the County of Ventura have enacted policies that require the correlation between land use planning and transportation planning. The State Government Code requires that the circulation and land use elements of city and county general plans be “correlated” and “consistent” with one another. In addition, the State mandates Congestion Management Plans that require regional transportation planning agencies and local governments to take actions necessary to ensure that roads will function at an adequate level of service. Therefore, local governments, along with transportation planning agencies, must plan the roads and highways within their jurisdiction in a manner that will adequately serve the planned land uses, taking into account the growth in regional traffic as well.

Funding for improvements to Federal and State highways comes from a variety of federal and State sources. It can be generally stated that improvements to federal and state highways are funded almost exclusively by federal and state sources, and the improvements to city and county roads are funded by gas tax, sales tax, and other State and local funding revenues. Because the cost of improvements to local roads generally exceeds the available revenues, most cities and counties have enacted local programs to imposed transportation improvement fees on new development. The County of Ventura enacted its Transportation Impact Mitigation Fee Ordinance in 1995 and has been collecting fees since that time.

To mitigate the traffic LOS impacts, the following improvements would be necessary (improvements are consistent with the current County General Plan unless otherwise noted):

Roadway	Improvements	Estimated Cost	Funding Source(s)	Listed on RTIP or Existing General Plan?	Feasible?
Hwy 101 between Santa Barbara County line and Ventura city limits	Widen to 6 lanes	$60 million	FHA; Caltrans; VCTC - RTIP or other regional funds	no, yes	Yes
Hwy 101 between Ventura city limits and Oxnard city limits	Widen to 10 lanes	$125 million	FHA; Caltrans; VCTC - RTIP or other regional funds	yes, yes	~~u~~Under ~~c~~Construction
Hwy 101 between Oxnard city limits and Camarillo city limits	Widen to 10 lanes	$10 million	FHA; Caltrans; VCTC - RTIP or other regional funds	no, 8 lanes only	May not be financially feasible to exceed eight lanes within adjacent cities.
Hwy 23 between Thousand Oaks city limits and Moorpark city limits	Widen to 6 lanes	$58 million (includes widening within adjacent cities	Caltrans; VCTC - RTIP or other regional funds	yes, yes	Yes
Hwy 23 between Moorpark city limits and Fillmore city limits	Realign curves, widen shoulders, construct passing lanes	$12 million	Caltrans; VCTC - RTIP or other regional funds	no, yes	Yes
Hwy 33 between Casitas Vista Rd and ~~Hwy 150~~ Oak View	Widen to 4 lanes from Casitas Vista to Oak View and bypass around Casitas Springs	$~~48~~ 140 million	Caltrans; VCTC - RTIP or other regional funds	no, yes	Yes

Hwy 33 between Ojai city limits and Santa Barbara County line	Realign curves, widen shoulders, construct passing lanes	~~$140~~ 48 million	Caltrans; VCTC - RTIP or other regional funds	no, no	Unknown
Hwy 34 between Oxnard city limits and Camarillo city limits	Widen to 4 lanes	$17 million	Caltrans; VCTC - RTIP or other regional funds	no, yes	~~Y~~Yes
Hwy 34 between Camarillo city limits and Hwy 118	Widen to 4 lanes	$6 million	Caltrans; VCTC - RTIP or other regional funds	no, no	Yes
Hwy 118 between Ventura city limits and Hwy 232	Re-stripe to 6 lanes	$0.2 million	Caltrans; VCTC - RTIP or other regional funds	no, no	Yes
Hwy 118 between Hwy 232 and Santa Clara Ave	Widen to 4 lanes	$15 million	Caltrans; VCTC - RTIP or other regional funds	no, yes	Yes
Hwy 118 between and Santa Clara Ave and Hwy 34	Widen to 4 lanes	$45 million	Caltrans; VCTC - RTIP or other regional funds	no, no	Yes
Hwy 118 between Hwy 34 and Moorpark city limits	Widen to 4 lanes	$35 million	Caltrans; VCTC - RTIP or other regional funds	no, yes	Yes
Hwy 150 between Ojai city limits and Santa Paula city limits	Realign curves, widen shoulders, construct passing lanes	$12 million	Caltrans; VCTC - RTIP or other regional funds	no, no	Unknown
Box Canyon Rd between Los Angeles Co line and Santa Susana Pass Rd	Realign curves, widen shoulders, construct passing lanes	$5 million	County - TIMF and other federal/state funds as available	no, no	~~Y~~Yes if TIMF is amended

Bristol Rd between Union Pacific RR and ~~Ventura city limits~~ Montgomery Ave.	~~Widen to 4 lanes~~ Realign curves, widen shoulders	$2 million	County - TIMF and other federal/state funds as available	no, ~~no~~ yes	~~y~~Yes if TIMF is amended
Cawelti Rd between Las Posas Rd and Lewis Rd	Amend General Plan and widen to 4 lanes	$4 million	County – TIMF and other federal/state funds as available	no, no	Yes
Central Ave between Santa Clara Ave and City of Camarillo	Widen to 4 lanes	$5.9 million	County - TIMF and other federal/state funds as available	no, yes	Yes
Channel Island Blvd between Oxnard city limits to Rice Ave	Widen to 4 lanes	$1.5 million	County - TIMF and other federal/state funds as available	no, no	~~y~~Yes if TIMF is amended
Harbor Blvd between W. Fifth St and Olivas Park Dr	Widen to 4 lanes	$16.9 million	County - TIMF and other federal/state funds as available	no, yes	Yes
Hueneme Rd between Oxnard city limits and Rice Rd	Widen to 4 lanes	$3.1 million	County - TIMF and other federal/state funds as available	yes, yes	~~y~~Yes
Hueneme Rd between Rice Rd and Las Posas Rd	Widen to 4 lanes	$8.5 million	County - TIMF and other federal/state funds as available	no, no	~~y~~Yes if TIMF is amended

Las Posas Rd between Hueneme Rd and Fifth St	Widen to 4 lanes	$4 million	County - TIMF and other federal/state funds as available	no, no	~~y~~Yes if TIMF is amended
Las Posas Rd between Fifth St and Camarillo city limits	Widen to 4 lanes	$2 million	County - TIMF and other federal/state funds as available	no, no	~~y~~Yes if TIMF is amended
Lewis Rd between CSUCI and Camarillo city limits	Widen to 4 lanes	$21 million	Caltrans; VCTC – RTIP County - TIMF and other federal/state funds as available	yes, yes	Yes
Moorpark Rd between Santa Rosa Rd and Tierra Rejada Rd	Widen to 4 lanes	$6 million	County - TIMF and other federal/state funds as available	no, no	~~y~~Yes if TIMF is amended
Olivas Park Dr between Telephone Rd and Seaborg Dr	Widen to 4 lanes	$3 million	County - TIMF and other federal/state funds as available	no, no	~~y~~Yes if TIMF is amended
Pleasant Valley Rd between Oxnard city limits and Las Posas Rd	Widen to 4 lanes	$13 million	County - TIMF and other federal/state funds as available	no, yes	Yes
East Potrero Road between W. Thousand Oaks city limits to Lake Sherwood Drive	Realign curves, widen shoulders, construct passing lanes	$10 million	County – TIMF and other federal/state funds as available	no, yes	Yes

Santa Clara Ave between Oxnard city limits to Hwy 118	Widen to 4 lanes	$17.2 million	County - TIMF and other federal/state funds as available	yes, yes	Yes
Santa Rosa Rd between Camarillo city limits and Moorpark Rd	Widen to 4 lanes	$9.4 million	County - TIMF and other federal/state funds as available	no, yes	Yes
Victoria Ave between Oxnard city limits and Gonzales Rd	Widen to 6 lanes	$4.4 million	County - TIMF and other federal/state funds as available	no, no	Yes
Victoria Ave between Gonzales Rd and Olivas Park Drive	Widen to 6 lanes	$10 million	County - TIMF and other federal/state funds as available	no, yes	Yes
Wendy Dr between Borchard Rd and Thousand Oaks city limits	Re-stripe to 4 lanes	$0.9 million	County - TIMF and other federal/state funds as available	no, yes	~~y~~Yes

Note: VCTC has the authority to prioritize the priority of spending of State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) funds and Federal and State highway and transit funds available to the County as a whole. This is a competitive process, with VCTC making the final allocation decisions. The TIMF program does not fully fund any one project because of the need to consider other funds that are known to be or reasonably anticipated to be available to fund part or all of the estimated cost of the improvements, and the fact that only a few cities have agreed to participate in a reciprocal traffic mitigation agreement with the County. ~~Likewise if Measure B, which is a ½ cent sales tax initiative, scheduled for a decision by the voters this November passes, the funding of transportation projects will be much improved.~~ VCTC and the cities and County continue to explore various methods to enhance monies available to improve the funding of transportation projects.

Widening Highway 101 to ten lanes within the cities of Thousand Oaks, Camarillo, Oxnard and Ventura does not appear to be financially feasible and would cause significant impacts on the character of those cities. Therefore, if Highway 101 is limited to eight lanes, the highway would operate at LOS E within those cities if other improvements are made to the Regional Road Network (see section 5-Alternatives).

Safety/Design of Public and Private Roads

Cumulative ministerial development can have a significant impact in areas that are served by substandard roads. This impact is cannot be feasibly mitigated.

Tactical Emergency Access

Cumulative ministerial development can have a significant impact in areas that are currently served by substandard roads. However, the Fire Protection District compensates for this deficiency by requiring that the individual structures have fire sprinklers and limited road improvements.

Pedestrian/Bicycle Access

As was stated previously, the County General Plan's *Goals, Policies and Programs* contains no goals, policies or programs to improve pedestrian or bicycle access in older, substandard residential neighborhoods or communities. Nonetheless, the *Goals, Policies and Programs* contain the following goal:

4.10.1-5 Establish or assist in the establishment of a Countywide network of trails which will meet the needs of equestrians, bicyclists, hikers and other trail user groups.

Although the County Board of Supervisors "conceptually" approved the *Regional Trails and Pathways Plan* in 1995, the County has no formal plan for the development of hiking, biking or equestrian trails.

The *Goals, Policies and Programs* also contains the following policy:

4.2.2-9 *Discretionary development* shall be conditioned, where feasible, to minimize traffic impacts by incorporating pedestrian and bicycle pathways, … for employees or residents of the proposed *development*.

The *North Ventura Avenue Area Plan* contains the following bicycle access policy:

9. Bikeways - A Class II Bikeway along Ventura Avenue, a Class III bikeway along Crooked Palm Road, and the Ojai/Ventura Class I Bike Path as shown on the "Bikeways Map" (Figure 4), should be established. (The Bikeway system is also reflected on the City's "Select System of Bikeways" [Appendix G]).

The *Oak Park Area Plan* contains the following pedestrian and/or bicycle access goal and policy:

4.1.1-3. Provide safe pedestrian and bicycle pathways throughout the Oak Park Community.

4.1.2-8. Pedestrian, equestrian, bicycle and bus turnout facilities shall be constructed and maintained in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Oak Park Specific Plan.

The *Ojai Valley Area Plan* contains the following pedestrian and/or bicycle access goal and programs:

4.1.1-3 Encourage the expansion of the Ojai Valley Trail.

4.1.3-2 CALTRANS should install modifications such as … pedestrian crossing facilities on Highway 33 from Foster Park to the city of Ojai as needed and where feasible, to achieve a safer highway for both motorists and pedestrians. To determine where the installation of such modifications should occur, a traffic study should be conducted by the County Public Works Agency. The study should include a travel time/intersection analysis and implementation strategies.

4.1.3-3 Without expanding the road beyond two lanes, CALTRANS should provide an acceptable and safe level of service on Highway 150 for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists and equestrians through modifications such as lane widening, curve alterations and bridge improvements where necessary and feasible.

4.1.3-4 A modification to Highway 33 is needed in the vicinity of Casitas Springs to improve pedestrian and motor vehicle safety and to allow for an improved sense of community in Casitas Springs. Funding and construction of a Casitas Springs by-pass should only be undertaken after a thorough and complete consideration of all alternatives, including but not limited to, couplets, pedestrian overcrossings and stoplights. …

4.1.3-5 The Ojai Valley Trail will continue to be maintained and should be extended where possible.

The *Piru Area Plan* contains the following pedestrian and/or bicycle access goal and policy:

4.1.1-3. Provide safe pedestrian and bicycle pathways throughout the Community.

4.1.2-5. Discretionary development shall be planned to facilitate pedestrian, bicycle, transit, as well as automobile access, both within and outside the development.

The *Thousand Oaks Area Plan* contains the following pedestrian and/or bicycle access goals and policies:

4.1.1-4 Provide safe pedestrian and bicycle pathways throughout the unincorporated Thousand Oaks area.

4.1.1-6 Ensure that road improvements are compatible with existing and planned equestrian trails and bicycle pathways.

4.1.2-5 The following *standards* shall apply to all roads constructed in *moderate* or *steeply sloped* hillside areas: …

(5) Sidewalks and walkways shall be provided in accordance with a carefully conceived pedestrian circulation plan, but shall not be rigidly required on every street. …

4.1.2-7 *Discretionary development* projects which may be expected to benefit from the road network, bicycle path system and/or the equestrian trail system shall be conditioned to dedicate land and construct improvements or pay a fee for auto, bicycle and equestrian facilities in accordance with the circulation maps. Bicycle and/or equestrian trails shall be integrated, where feasible, into the overall circulation plan for *discretionary development* projects.

The *Goals, Policies and Programs* could be amended to require that, as Area Plans are updated, a community-wide pedestrian and bicycle access master plan be prepared and that funding mechanisms for acquisition and construction of sidewalks and bike paths be explored. In older communities, the acquisition and construction of sidewalks and bike paths may prove to be physically or financially infeasible. In addition, many of the existing communities are not covered by an Area Plan and there isn't any readily available funding for development and construction of a pedestrian and bicycle access master plan. The creation of County redevelopment districts, County Service Areas, and Community Service Districts could be potential sources of revenue, but may prove to be infeasible unless existing property owners agree to tax themselves for these types of improvements.

Off-Street Parking

The California Highway Patrol and County Sheriff's Department have the authority to order the towing of vehicles that are illegally parked within the public street right-of-way. The Fire Protection District and private property owner associations have the authority to order the towing of vehicles that are blocking private roads. As a result, construction contractors may have to carpool workers into the site during construction.

Bus Transit

The General Plan *Goals, Policies and Programs* contains the following goal:

4.2.1-5. Promote the development of a safe, efficient, convenient and economical community, intercommunity and Countywide bus transit system.

In addition, the General Plan *Goals, Policies and Programs* contains the following policy:

4.2.2-9. *Discretionary development* shall be conditioned, where feasible, to minimize traffic impacts by incorporating …, transit improvements (bus turnouts, shelters, benches), and/or transit subsidies for employees or residents of the proposed *development*.

Therefore, direct impact to bus facilities from discretionary development is considered less than significant.

The responsibility for mitigating the increased demand for bus services from cumulative development lies with the Ventura County Transportation Commission and the individual bus operators. Nonetheless, discretionary projects that have extra ordinary demand for bus service (e.g., farmworker housing complexes, very low-income housing projects), may have a significant impact that would have to be evaluated and mitigated on a case-by-case basis.

Railroads

Discretionary development adjacent to railroad rights-of-way can be conditioned to provide walls or fences that would inhibit trespass onto railroad rights-of-way. Additionally, discretionary development taking access on roads that have uncontrolled railroad crossings can be conditioned to make safety improvements. These types of improvements are routinely required of discretionary development, but are not applied to ministerial development.

Harbors

Cumulative demand for harbor facilities for transport of raw materials and goods and recreational boats is not regarded as significant, so no mitigation measures are necessary.

Pipelines

Discretionary development is routinely reviewed for impacts to and potential impacts from pipelines, and is conditioned to reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level. Likewise, ministerial development is reviewed for potential pipeline impacts under the authority of the *California Building Code* and *County Building Code*.

4.14.4 Residual Impacts

Level of Service (LOS) of Public Roads

Some of the mitigation measures listed in section 4.14.3 above were found to be infeasible, or the feasibility is not currently known. Therefore, the residual impact is regarded as potentially significant.

Safety/Design of Public and Private Roads

Cumulative ministerial development can have a significant impact in areas that are served by substandard roads. This impact cannot be feasibly mitigated and remains potentially significant.

Tactical Emergency Access

Cumulative ministerial development can have a significant impact in areas that are served by substandard roads. However, the Fire Protection District compensates for this deficiency by requiring that the individual structures have fire sprinklers and limited road improvements. Fire sprinklers, however, do not reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level.

Pedestrian/Bicycle Access

The existing policies and programs of the *Goals, Policies and Programs* and Area Plans are inadequate to reduce the pedestrian and bicycle impact in older communities to a less-than-significant level. Although a policy could be added to require that, as Area Plans are updated, a community-wide pedestrian and bicycle access master plan be prepared and funding mechanisms explored, this would not cover many of the existing communities and may prove to be physically or financially infeasible. Therefore, the residual impact remains potentially significant.

Off-Street Parking

The towing of illegally parked vehicles during construction is feasible and would mitigate the impact of construction parking. However, the governmental agencies with the authority to order the towing of illegally parked vehicles will only respond to complaints as they are received from aggrieved property owners. Nonetheless, the residual impact is considered less-than-significant.

Bus Transit

The mitigation measures regarding project impacts to bus transit facilities and demand for bus services are feasible and would mitigate the impact to a less-than-significant level.

Railroads

Conditioning of discretionary development to provide walls and traffic safety improvements mitigates trespass, vandalism and railroad/street crossing impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Harbors

Not applicable.

Pipelines

The residual impact is less than significant.

Figure 4.14-1
Roadway Levels of Service

Level of Service (LOS)	Traffic Conditions
A	Free uninterrupted low volume flow at high speeds with no restriction on maneuverability (lane changing) and with little or no delays.
B	Stable flow with some restrictions to operating speed occurring.
C	Stable flow but with speed and maneuverability restricted by higher traffic volumes. Satisfactory operating speed for urban locations with some delays at signals.
D	Approaching unstable flow with tolerable operating speeds subject to considerable and sudden variation, little freedom to maneuver and with major delays at signals.
E	Unstable flow with volume at or near capacity, lower operating speeds and major delays and stoppages.
F	Forced flow operation with low speeds and stoppages for long periods due to congestion. Volumes below capacity.

Figure 4.14-2
Average Daily Traffic (ADT) Level of Service (LOS) Thresholds - County Roads/Conventional State Highways, and Freeways Table

Average Daily Traffic (ADT) Level Of Service (LOS) Thresholds County Roads And Conventional State Highways					
LOS	Class I			Class II	Class III
	2 Lanes	4 Lanes	6 Lanes	2 Lanes	2 Lanes
A	2,400	19,000	29,000	1,500	350
B	5,600	28,000	42,000	3,900	2,000
C	10,000	38,000	57,000	7,000	3,300
D	16,000	47,000	70,000	11,000	5,900
E	27,000	58,000	87,000	21,000	16,000

ADT/LOS Thresholds Freeways				
LOS	4 Lanes	6 Lanes	8 Lanes	10 Lanes
A	31,000	46,000	62,000	77,000
B	48,000	71,000	95,000	119,000
C	68,000	102,000	136,000	169,000
D	82,000	123,000	164,000	205,000
E	88,000	132,000	176,000	220,000

SOURCE: Ventura County Public Works Agency 9/94

4.15 Airports/Aviation Hazards

Land uses that impede County's ability to provide safe and adequate airports are considered as potentially significant. Uses that are incompatible with airports include, but are not limited to: high buildings, residential units, refineries, churches and schools within the airport sphere of interest. Generally, projects with the potential to generate complaints and concerns, or which are within two miles of either County operated airport, would interfere with County's mission and be deemed as having a significant impact.

4.15.1 Environmental Setting

There are four airports in Ventura County, which include County-owned and operated airports at Camarillo and Oxnard, a private airport at Santa Paula and the Federally operated Navy Base Ventura County Point Mugu Site [formerly the Point Mugu Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS)] and a runway at San Nicholas Island. The California Air National Guard has an operation on a 208 acre site adjacent to, and utilizes the runways at, the Point Mugu Site. In addition, there are a few privately owned landing strips scattered throughout the County.

Oxnard Airport

The Oxnard Airport is a 212 acre facility located in Oxnard and, although within the corporate boundaries of Oxnard, is operated by the County of Ventura.

There are an estimated 140,000 annual aircraft flights at the Oxnard Airport, 90 percent for general aviation activities, 5 percent combined air taxi and commuter, and the remaining 5 percent used by helicopters. Oxnard Airport is served by three regional air carriers, which offer 18 daily flights to such market areas as Los Angeles, Sacramento and Santa Barbara.

Camarillo Airport

The Camarillo Airport, owned and operated by the County of Ventura, was formerly known as the Oxnard Air Force Base. It is located three miles southwest of the center of the City of Camarillo and lies within the city limits. The city is 45 miles northwest of Los Angeles and 379 miles south of San Francisco and borders the Ventura Freeway (Highway 101). Camarillo lies within the Oxnard Plain approximately eight miles northeast of the Pacific coastline.

For 1990, there were an estimated total of 222,000 annual aircraft take offs and landings at the Camarillo Airport: 93 percent for general aviation activities, 4 percent were Air Taxi flights, and the remaining 3 percent were helicopter activities.

Navy Base Ventura County: Point Mugu Site

The 4,500 acre Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS) and Warfare Center Weapons Division Headquarters (NAWCWPNS) is located at the western end of the agricultural lands of the Oxnard Plain, six miles southeast of Oxnard and 7-1/2 miles southwest of Camarillo. The Ventura County and Point Mugu Game preserves (private clubs not associated with the Navy) are located to the northwest of the base with the Camarillo State Hospital 4 miles northeast. The base is flanked by the Santa Monica Mountains on the east and the Pacific Ocean to the south. The facility was originally developed during World War II as an extension of the base at Port Hueneme and the early operations were those associated with the training of Seabee personnel.

NAWS Point Mugu falls under the command structure of NAWCWPNS, but is a separate command with its own charter. NAWS Point Mugu has been assigned the following functions:

- serve as an "all weather" air station,
- provide search and rescue services,
- maintain and operate an air terminal,

- provide radar approach/departure control services for the Oxnard Plain area,
- maintain and operate Outlying Field San Nicolas Island,
- perform services in support of the NAWCWPNS,
- provide administrative and military control of naval facilities at Channel Islands, and
- provide operational, logistic, and administrative support to tenants and assigned activities.

The primary mission of NAWCWPNS at Point Mugu is to perform development test and evaluation; development support and follow-on engineering; logistics and training support for naval weapons, weapons systems and related devices; and associated activities. NAWCWPNS Point Mugu also maintains facilities away from the main station including facilities at the Camarillo Airport, the Port Hueneme Naval Complex, Laguna Peak, and the off-shore islands of San Nicolas (10,000' runway), Santa Cruz, San Miguel, and Santa Rosa. NAWCWPNS Point Mugu also maintains a 30,000-square-mile air/sea missile test range.

In performance of their missions, Navy Units at Point Mugu require many varied and different types of aircraft. The on-base military aircraft fleet generally consists of approximately 120 aircraft. Several of these aircraft are associated with reserve squadrons.

Aircraft flights at Point Mugu are directly proportional to the levels of missile testing and requirements for pilot training which occur at the facility. Point Mugu maintains an air traffic control center which controls all aircraft in southern Ventura County. A military approach control facility and control tower provides service seven days a week.

The number of aircraft flights at Point Mugu is in excess of 200,000 per year. Hours of operation of the airfield are normally between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. daily and closed on holidays. In reality, however, utilization of the airfield is very low in the early morning and evening hours. The peak days of activity at Point Mugu usually occur on Wednesdays or Thursdays, whereas the least active day is Sunday. Peak hours vary from day to day, depending on changing mission requirements.

Channel Islands Air National Guard Base

The 146 Tactical Airlift Wing officially dedicated a new 208 acre installation in September of 1990. This property is north of Pt. Mugu NAWS and is at the intersection of Hueneme and Navalair Roads.

This California Air National Guard Wing relocated their C-130 aircraft from Van Nuys Airport to this site beginning in 1989. The unit uses the Pt. Mugu NAWS runway via a connecting 2,500 foot taxiway annexation for aircraft flights. Normal activities average 30 take offs and landings per day between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, with an additional five return flights on weekends.

Flight activity increases when this unit is tasked for Fire Support Missions in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service or The California Department of Forestry. The mission of this unit is to train other assigned units military war skills once a month and to fulfill various two week active duty obligations. This assignment results in a total of over 1,500 personnel during Unit Training Assemblies. The Wing is an operational unit under the Air Force Air Mobility Command (AMC).

Santa Paula Airport and other Private Landing Strips

The privately owned Santa Paula Airport is located within the city limits of Santa Paula, south of State Highway 126. The airport is owned by the Santa Paula Airport Association, Ltd. and is operated by the owners (stockholders). Currently there are several airport related businesses located at the Santa Paula Airport including the Santa Paula Flight Center which provides parts, supplies, instruction, fuel and maintenance, the airport cafe plus additional aircraft related businesses.

Virtually all of the estimated 52,400 annual aircraft operations at the airport involve general aviation aircraft. There is no tower, thus limiting hours of operation to daytime only. Helicopters also operate out of this facility.

Finally, there are a few privately owned and operated landing strips scattered throughout the County.

Ventura County Airport Comprehensive Plan

The Public Utilities Code of the State of California, Section 21670 et. seq., requires the County Board of Supervisors to establish an Airport Land Use cCommission (ALUC) in each county with an airport operated for the benefit of the general public. The code also set forth the range of responsibilities, duties, and powers of the Commission.

Instead of creating a new body to serve as the ALUC, State law allows the county board of supervisors to authorize an appropriately designated body to fulfill ALUC responsibilities (see Section 21670.1). In Ventura County, the Board of Supervisors has designated the Ventura County Transportation Commission to act as the ALUC for the County.

Section 21675 requires the ALUC to formulate a comprehensive land use plan for the area surrounding each public use airport. The ALUC may also formulate a plan for the area surrounding any federal military airport located in the County. The purpose of the comprehensive land use plan is to protect and promote the safety and welfare of residents near the military and public use airports in the County, as well as airport users, while promoting the continued operation of those airports. Specifically the plan seeks to protect the public from the adverse affects of the airport noise, to ensure that people and facilities are not concentrated in areas susceptible to aircraft accidents, and to ensure that no structures or activities encroach upon or adversely affect the use of navigable airspace.

In Ventura County the Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan applies to four airports; Camarillo and Oxnard, both operated by the Ventura County Department of Airports; Santa Paula Airport, a privately owned airport open for public use; and NAWS Point Mugu.

4.15.2 Environmental Impacts

Aircraft Incidents

The most critical stages of the flight of an aircraft are takeoff and landing; a significant proportion of aircraft accidents occur during these stages. Although airplane crashes can occur anywhere, crashes that affect life and property on the ground occur most frequently in airport approach and departure zones. Residences, schools, and other buildings occupied by people that are located in such zones are subject to an ever-present risk from airplane accidents. Hazard zones have been identified for the four airports within the County: 1) Ventura County Airport at Oxnard; 2) Ventura County Airport at Camarillo; 3) Santa Paula Airport; and 4) Naval Base Ventura County, Point Mugu. These zones represent the general areas most frequently impacted by aircraft emergency or crash landing during the take-off or approach phase. They also represent the areas which, based on aircraft operations and accident probability, should be controlled for the safety of persons both on the ground and in the aircraft. The determination of the hazard areas is based on landing and take-off patterns and clear zones extending beyond the runway as recommended by the Federal Aviation Administration.

Oxnard and Camarillo airports had a combined total of over 270,000 annual aircraft flights in 2003. With an additional 80,000 aircraft flights at Naval Base Ventura County, Point Mugu and an estimated 70,000 at Santa Paula Airport, the airspace in which these airborne activities are conducted can be, at times, heavily congested. While there will always be the potential for accidents, those historically involving serious or fatal injuries have been few in number. The Camarillo and Oxnard airports have FAA-staffed Air Traffic Control Towers providing positive control over aircraft in the respective areas from 7:00 am to 9:00 pm local time. Additionally, the tower at Point Mugu is active from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

The primary effects on the ground of aircraft accidents are injuries to people and damage to property in the area of impact. The severity of accidents varies greatly, depending on the weight, speed, and fuel load of the aircraft. The amount of destruction resulting from an accident also depends on the land uses in the impact area. Fewer lives would be threatened by a crash into a single-family house than by a crash into a school.

The secondary effects of aircraft accidents are more difficult to assess. It appears that some residents in the areas under flight patterns are often fearful of planes crashing into their houses. Combined with

the problems of noise, this fear can result in pressures from residents to end or restrict airport operations.

Aircraft Noise

For Oxnard and Camarillo Airports, PRC Engineering completed ANLUC Studies in 1983 which produced CNEL contour maps for a variety of airport development options. The Long-Range Forecast contour maps from both studies are reproduced in the *Hazards Appendix*. The 1992 AICUZ study for Point Mugu Naval Air Station produced CNEL contours for that facility, reproduced in the *Hazards Appendix*, most of which lie in unincorporated County territory.

County areas impacted by noise levels in excess of CNEL 60 from Camarillo and Oxnard Airports are currently occupied by agricultural uses. The NAS noise impact zones encompass on-base activities including housing, and low density residential and commercial uses along eastern Hueneme Road and Lewis Road. Camarillo State Hospital is exposed to approximately CNEL 50.

Outdoor recreational areas in the form of private duck hunting clubs are located immediately to the northwest of the main runway, in the CNEL 70-75 zone. An interview with one club member indicated that although the noise was unnerving the first two or three times he visited, he became rapidly acclimated.

Touch-and-go operations occur at Santa Paula Airport on weekdays, with aircraft circling the airport to the southeast, affecting low-density residences along South Mountain Road. The 1974 County Noise Element presented CNEL 55 and 65 noise contours for Santa Paula Airport which have been reproduced in the *Hazards Appendix*. These indicate that the CNEL 55, and therefore the CNEL 60 contour, is essentially contained within the Santa Paula City Limits. Measurements of noise levels outside the city are included in the Measurements section of the report.

Land Use Plans

The County General Plan *Goals, Policies and Programs* General Land Use Map designates the land under the approach and departure zones and the 65 CNEL noise contour of the four airports as Agricultural. As such, most land uses allowed under that designation are compatible with airport operations. Potentially incompatible land uses (e.g., government buildings, farmworker housing complexes) require a discretionary permit, which would be reviewed for consistency with the Ventura County Airport Comprehensive Plan.

The general plans of the respective cities designate the land under approach and departure zones and the 65 CNEL noise contours of the four airports for many types of urban residential, commercial and industrial land uses, some of which may be inconsistent with the Ventura County Airport Comprehensive Plan.

4.15.3 Mitigation Measures

The County General Plan Goals, Policies and Programs contain the following policies that help mitigate the potential impact on airports and airport hazards:

2.14.2-2 The following policies apply to airports and land in proximity to airports:

(1) To avoid accidents, land located within Airport Hazard Zones as depicted on the Hazards Protection Maps….., shall be designated Agriculture or Open Space on the General Plan Land Use Map …..and shall be limited to the following uses:

- Agriculture and agricultural operations.
- Cemeteries.
- Energy production from renewable resources.
- Mineral resource development.
- Public utility facilities.

- Temporary storage of building materials.
- Waste treatment and disposal.
- Water production and distribution facilities.

(2) Development within the Airport Hazard Zones shall comply with Part 77 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (objects affecting navigable airspace).

(3) Private airstrips and agricultural landing fields shall be sited so as not to conflict with the flight paths of existing airports and outside of areas that would present significant hazard or an annoyance to existing or planned land uses.

(4) *Discretionary development* within the Airport Hazard Zones shall be reviewed by the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) for consistency with the Ventura County Comprehensive Airport Land Use Plan.

4.2.2-11 *Discretionary development* which would endanger the efficient, safe operation of an airport or would result in significant land use incompatibility with an airport shall be prohibited.

Development within the incorporated cities is subject of a finding of compatibility with the Ventura County Airport Comprehensive Plan, unless the city council adopts a statement of reasons why the project should be constructed and operated in spite of the project's inconsistencies.

4.15.4 Residual Impacts

Imposing General Plan policies on future discretionary development would mitigate the potential significant impacts of airport hazards. However, future development within cities could potentially cause significant, adverse impacts that would not be mitigated to a less-than-significant level.

4.16 Water Supply/Resources

The County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines contains the following criteria for determining significant impacts on water resources and supply:

Groundwater Quantity

A land use or activity, which could cause a significant adverse impact upon groundwater quantity in itself or on a cumulative basis. Threshold criteria include, but are not limited to:

1. Any land use that will directly or indirectly decrease, either individually or cumulatively, the net quantity of groundwater in a basin that is overdrafted, shall be considered to have a potentially significant impact.
2. In groundwater basins that are not overdrafted, or are not in hydrologic continuity with an overdrafted basin, net groundwater extraction that will individually or cumulatively cause the basin(s) to become overdrafted, shall be considered to have a potentially significant impact.
3. In areas where the basin condition is not known and there is evidence of overdraft due to declining water levels in a well or wells, it shall be assumed that any net increase in groundwater extraction may potentially cause a significant impact until such time as reliable studies determine otherwise.
4. Notwithstanding the above, any project which would result in 0.15 acre-feet, or less, of net annual increase in groundwater extraction is not considered to have a significant project or cumulative impact.
5. The Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency (FCGMA) is in itself mitigation for water used within the FCGMA boundary, provided there is compliance with FCGMA Ordinances. (These ordinances may require a significant penalty for exceeding an established allocation.)

Groundwater Quality

A land use, or activity, which could cause a significant impact upon groundwater quality in itself or on a cumulative basis. Threshold criteria include, but are not limited to:

1. Any land use proposal that will individually or cumulatively degrade the quality of groundwater and cause groundwater to fail to meet groundwater quality objectives set by the LARWQCB shall be considered to have a potentially significant impact.
2. In cases where the proposed land use impact upon the quality of groundwater is unknown, and there is evidence that the proposed land use could cause the quality of groundwater to fail to meet the groundwater quality objectives set by the LARWQCB, the project shall be considered to have a potentially significant impact until such time as reliable studies determine otherwise.

Surface Water Quantity

A land use or activity that could cause a significant adverse impact upon surface water quantity in itself or on a cumulative basis. Threshold criteria include, but are not limited to:

1. Any use that will increase the net utilization of surface water in a hydrologic unit that is overdrafted or adversely impacts an overdrafted hydrologic unit is a significant adverse impact.
2. In hydrologic units that are not overdrafted or that do not impact an overdrafted hydrologic unit, water use that will individually or cumulatively cause the hydrologic unit to become overdrafted is a significant adverse impact.

3. In areas where the hydrologic unit condition is not known, it must be assumed that any net increase in surface water use may potentially cause a significant impact unless a reliable study determines otherwise.

Surface Water Quality

A land use or activity that could cause a significant adverse impact upon surface water quality in itself or on a cumulative basis. Threshold criteria include, but are not limited to:

1. Any land use proposal that will degrade the quality of surface water and cause it to fail to meet surface water quality objectives for a hydrologic unit defined in the [Regional Water Quality Control Board identified] 4A, 3 or 5D [Basin] Plans is a significant adverse impact.
2. In cases where the proposed land use impact upon the quality of surface water is unknown or the quality of surface water in a hydrologic unit is unknown, the impact is unknown and must be determined by additional investigation.

Water Supply

With regard to water supply, a project will be considered having a significant impact if:

1. It cannot meet the required fire flow as determined by:
   a. The I.S.O. Guide for Determination of required fire flow.
   b. The Ventura County Waterworks Manual.
   c. Ordinance 18 (UFC).
   d. Fire Prevention Policy Guides F84-3, F84-4, W84-1, W8-3 and W89-4.
2. If it cannot provide an acceptable mitigation factor, i.e., fire sprinklers to allow for a reduction in the required fire flow.
3. A private water system cannot meet flow, duration, or reliability requirements as defined in the Ventura County Waterworks Manual.

4.16.1 Environmental Setting

Water Resources

Ventura County's water supplies are primarily obtained from three major sources: groundwater (65%), surface water (8.5%), and imported water (25%). A small amount of reclaimed water (approximately 1.5%) is also used when and where it is available. Figure 4.16-1 shows surface and groundwater water resources for the south half of the county (information for the north half is not available). Figure 4.16-2 depicts municipal and industrial water use for the ten incorporated cities plus the unincorporated county as of the year 2000.

Water Distribution

As of year-end 2002, there were ~~166~~ 181 licensed water purveyors in Ventura County. This includes 7 city-owned and operated systems, 2~~2~~1 special water districts, 25 public water purveyors, ~~5~~6 Public Utility Commission (PUC) regulated water companies, 63 mutual water companies and 59 other privately owned systems of varying sizes. In addition to the 500 or so water wells owned or operated by the retail and wholesale water providers, it is estimated there are about 2,500 additional individual well owners within the county who obtain their own water directly from groundwater sources. Of the groundwater pumped in Ventura County, less than one third is delivered by an organized water system. Individual well owners do most of the groundwater pumping in Ventura County and use it mostly used for irrigation.

Groundwater

Groundwater is the largest single source of water. It provides about 65% of the water utilized in the County. Agricultural demand accounts for 80% of the total demand for groundwater in the County.

Of the total County water demand in calendar year 2002, [~~(~~approximately 430,500 acre-feet ("AF")],~~")~~, about 279,800 AF came from local groundwater sources. Because it is estimated that the local groundwater basins can safe~~t~~ly supply only about 275,000 AF countywide, water users extracted nearly 4,800 AFY (acre-feet per year) more than was naturally and artificially replenished. However, overdraft of between 30,000 to 35,000 AFY persists for the Oxnard Plain and Pleasant Valley. This compares with at least 31,000 AF of overdraft estimated in 1988. Groundwater is pumped extensively by individual well owners and by a majority of the ~~180~~ 181 public water purveyors within the County. Purveyors either wholesale water to other purveyors or make deliveries directly to individual users. Since more groundwater is used than is replaced, overall, the County's groundwater reserves are slowly decreasing.

The bulk of the County's groundwater supply is primarily contained within five major aquifers beneath the Oxnard Plain-Pleasant Valley area. These aquifers are, in order of increasing depth, the Oxnard, Mugu, Hueneme, Fox Canyon, and Grimes Canyon aquifer zones. Both the Oxnard aquifer in the Oxnard Plain area, and the deeper Fox Canyon aquifer, ~~that~~ which effectively extends from the present day coastline to inland areas northeast of the City of Moorpark, were previously, or are currently, being overdrafted or "mined" of their resource. This overdrafting of the local water supply has caused a number of problems, most notably seawater intrusion in the Upper Aquifer system (UAS) and Lower Aquifer system (LAS) of the Oxnard Plain. The UAS consists of the Perched or Semi-Perched zones, the Oxnard and the Mugu aquifers. The LAS is comprised of the Hueneme, Fox Canyon and Grimes Canyon aquifers.

Beneath the Oxnard Plain, the gross overdraft of the Oxnard aquifer has been largely eliminated in recent years through effective management practices and constant recharge activities. However, even with targeted improvements, some areas still remain impacted by saline waters previously drawn into the aquifer. Projects such as the Pumping Trough Pipeline (1986), the Freeman Diversion (1991) and the Noble Pit spreading basin (1995), coupled with wet-to-average climatic conditions and reduced pumping, contributed to improving conditions in the UAS. Conditions in the UAS have improved partially at the expense of the LAS which has been pumped heavily in recent years. The LAS is seriously overdrafted in the southern Oxnard Plain and Pleasant Valley basins, where the intrusion of saline water continues. The United Water Conservation District ~~is in the final stages of completing a~~ has constructed a new UAS shallow well extraction field near Saticoy to utilize UAS water that is more easily replenished~~,. thus allowing~~ This allows an increase in water deliveries, while at the same time, helping to alleviate the seawater intrusion problem in the overdrafted areas by providing an underutilized source of water. The Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency has also tightened restrictions and instituted strict management procedures on all groundwater extractions and well operators located on parcels above the Fox Canyon aquifer.

Of the groundwater pumped in Ventura County, less than one third is delivered by a water system. Individual well owners do most of the groundwater pumping in Ventura County and use it mostly for irrigation.

Most farmers obtain water from their own wells. Water demand from the agricultural sector is decreasing, primarily due to land conversion to urban uses. This trend is expected to continue. Countywide demand for agricultural water is forecasted to decline by about 35,000 AFY by the year 2010. Another 20,000 to 25,000 AF decline may be anticipated between the years 2010 and 2020. Within the boundaries of the Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency (FCGMA), a 25% reduction in groundwater extractions has been implemented for all well owners. Well owners have had 5% reductions in extractions in 1992, 1995, 2000, and 2005. The final 5% reduction is scheduled for 2010.

Individuals and retail purveyors within the Casitas Municipal Water District area pump approximately 10,000 AFY of groundwater from within the district boundary. The safe yield of the groundwater basins has not been precisely determined.

Surface Water

Surface water resources in Ventura County are divided into major hydrological units or drainage basins such as the Ventura River and Santa Clara River-Calleguas Creek systems. These main units are further subdivided into dozens of subunits.

Surface water is obtained from Lake Casitas, Lake Piru and from diversion projects on the Santa Clara River, Ventura River and Conejo Creek. By year-end ~~2002~~ 2004, surface water provided approximately 8.5% of the total water utilized in Ventura County.

The primary source of local surface water is Lake Casitas, which is owned and maintained by the Casitas Municipal Water District (CMWD). CMWD primarily wholesales water to retailers for municipal, industrial and agricultural uses within the Ojai Valley, the City of Ventura and various smaller retailers along or near the Ventura River. Per recent changes in State law, it also retails directly to some customers from a combination of surface and groundwater sources. Although CMWD owns a handful of wells within the Ventura River drainage basin, most water supplies are derived from their Robles Diversion structure at the north end of the Ventura River above the unincorporated community of Meiners Oaks. Casitas MWD also retails water directly to some users along the North Coast area of the County, almost up to the Santa Barbara County line.

Lake Casitas Reservoir has a capacity of 254,000 acre-feet of storage, with a "safe yield" of approximately 20,350 acre-feet per year from the surface water source.

United Water Conservation District operates and maintains Lake Piru, diversion structures on Piru Creek and the Santa Clara River (Freeman Diversion), and the associated spreading grounds along the Santa Clara River in Piru, Saticoy and El Rio. ~~United WCD is responsible for wholesale water distribution throughout most of the Santa Clara River Valley.~~ Several water purveyors and individuals utilize water diverted from the Santa Clara River by United WCD.

Lake Piru is United's storage reservoir for water which is later released into the Santa Clara River to replenish groundwater basins, and to spreading grounds where it is used to percolate directly into underground aquifers. Subsequent uses are wholesaling to retail purveyors, agricultural use and recharge. The capacity of Lake Piru is 88,000 acre-feet~~,~~. ~~with~~ Lake Piru is operated as a conservation reservoir and has an annual ~~safe~~ yield of approximately 15,000 acre-feet per year. UWCD also collects Santa Clara River water at the Freeman Diversion facility.

United diverts natural surface flows in the Santa Clara River to spreading basins or recharge ponds in the Oxnard Forebay ~~b~~Basin to replenish the aquifers beneath the Oxnard Plain. United also supplies diverted surface water directly to agricultural users on the Oxnard Plain and Pleasant Valley area via its Pumping Through Pipeline (PTP). Releases from Lake Piru in the later summer or fall, when sufficient supplies are available, provide surface flows that act as groundwater recharge but also enhance agricultural deliveries at a time when the Santa Clara River is normally dry.

Ventura River surface water is diverted by the City of Ventura via an in-stream underground dam and group of shallow extraction wells at Foster Park for use in the City's delivery system. A few individual property owners also divert some water from the Santa Clara and Ventura Rivers through temporary surface pumps of permanent shallow in-stream wells.

Surface water is also diverted for agricultural use by private individuals along the Ventura and Santa Clara Rivers. Several small mutual water companies, the U.S. Forest Service, and private individuals use springs as their source of water supply.

Imported Water

Imported water is obtained by Calleguas Municipal Water District (CMWD) from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) for delivery to smaller retailer purveyors primarily in the southern and eastern portions of the County, including the cities of Thousand Oaks, Simi Valley, Moorpark, Camarillo, Port Hueneme and Oxnard. As of year-end ~~2002~~ 2004, imported water, which is State Project water from the Sacramento Delta area, amounted to about 25 percent of the water utilized in the County. The Casitas MWD, United WCD, County of Ventura, and the City of Ventura have jointly studied the feasibility of constructing various types of distribution facilities to import

additional State Project water, to which they collectively hold a yearly entitlement of 20,000 acre-feet. Plans to obtain additional State Project Water are continuing, however, analysis of the appropriate institutional and financial arrangements must take place before the participants can plan any facilities construction. The only other way that State Project Water can enter Ventura County, other than through Calleguas via MWD, is from releases out of Lake Pyramid, down Piru Creek, through Lake Piru, and either overflows, or planned releases from Santa Felicia Dam into the Santa Clara River. Such imports are only arranged by UWCD when conditions are sufficient and a positive effect can be obtained, and UWCD only holds 3,150 AF of the total entitlement.

Calleguas Mutual Water District is currently in the final stages of constructing the Las Posas Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) Project. The project is jointly funded by Calleguas and Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) and will include 30 dual-purpose extraction and injection wells in three well fields within the East Las Posas Groundwater Basin. The ASR project will store up to 300,000 acre-feet of imported State Project water for use during peak periods, droughts, scheduled shutdowns or emergencies. The ASR project will have a maximum replenishment rate of 80 cubic feet per second (cfs) and maximum extraction rate of 100 cfs. The project also includes several miles of large diameter pipeline to connect the wells to the Calleguas transmission system, a new pump station in the City of Moorpark to convey water to the Lake Bard Water Treatment Plant and rehabilitation of the Conejo Pumping Station, to deliver ASR water to upper elevation zones east of the Moorpark sewage treatment plant during an emergency.

ASR Wellfields No. 1 and 2, and associated facilities have been completed in the Grimes Canyon area west of Moorpark and are expected to be fully constructed and ~~are expected to be~~ fully connected with the rest of the Calleguas system by ~~year-end 2004~~ 2005. Total project completion is planned for 2008. ASR project water is currently being stored when available in those wells already completed. Several retail water purveyors with groundwater pumping capacity have reduced their groundwater extractions in lieu of using direct deliveries of Calleguas/MWD water and, in return, have transferred previously earned Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency (FCGMA) credits to Calleguas/MWD for use in the East Las Posas Basin.

The ASR project presents several advantages for the management of water supply and demand. By purchasing State Project Water (originating near the Sacramento Bay-Delta area) when available during winter months, the price is more reasonable. Further, storage of this water underground in aquifers several hundred feet beneath the surface of the ground requires no construction of surface reservoirs, the land use is not disrupted, evaporation is not a factor, and costs are substantially less. Imported water is of similar quality to the existing native groundwater and thus a change in water chemistry is within an acceptable range.

When needed during summer months or during times of drought, the stored underground supplies can be easily tapped by reversing the direction of the pump motors on the ASR injection-extraction wells. ~~Several retail water purveyors with groundwater pumping capacity have reduced their groundwater extractions in lieu of using or directly purchasing Calleguas/MWD water, and in return, have transferred previously earned Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency (FCGMA) credits to Calleguas/MWD for use in the East Las Posas Basin to support the ASR project.~~

The Port Hueneme Water Agency (PHWA) has a long-term lease for 1,850 acre-feet of United WCD's annual State Water Project entitlement of 5,000 AF. PHWA obtains this entitlement indirectly from Calleguas MWD via the City of Oxnard. ~~United WCD periodically calls for all or part of its remaining 3,150 AF from the State Department of Water Resources, which delivers from Pyramid Lake via Piru Creek to United's Lake Piru Reservoir.~~ United WCD has, in recent years, been buying the remaining 3,150 AFY from the State Department of Water Resources, which delivers the water from Pyramid Lake via Piru Creek to United's Lake Piru Reservoir. United WCD has, under certain hydrologic conditions, also begun to acquire a portion of the City of San Buenaventura's unused allocation of SWP water. PHWA and UWCD are the only two county agencies that have utilized the State Water option. However, ~~due to over-allocations of the State Water Project,~~ since the State Water Project facilities were never fully developed, the DWR has historically delivered only 40 to ~~80~~ 100 percent of any agency's full entitlement in any given year. Long-term reliability is only 50 percent on average.

Water Quality

Groundwater quality degradation is evident in some areas of the County. Nitrate concentrations in violation of State drinking water standards have been found in "plumes" in parts of the Oxnard Plain upper aquifer areas and in isolated cases in the Forebay Basin, North Las Posas Basin, Santa Rosa Basin, Ojai, Piru, Fillmore, Upper Ojai, Upper Ventura River, and Santa Paula areas. Studies conducted by the Ventura County Environmental Health Department and Water Resources Division show that high nitrate levels in the Oxnard aquifer and other areas are usually a direct result of Private Septic Systems and/or agricultural fertilizer use. An overall increase of approximately 1 percent per year in total dissolved solids (TDS) levels has been noted in almost every significant groundwater basin over the past 30 to 40 years. The dominant chemical compound in local groundwater is usually sulfate. ~~Agricultural fertilizer use, rock type, and individual septic systems contribute the majority of this compound.~~ The U.S. Geological Survey feels that the primary source of the sulfate anion is natural, although agricultural fertilizer use, rock type, and individual septic systems also contribute to the overall concentration of this compound. Countywide, chloride levels have also generally increased as a result of spreading urbanization and especially due to the rise in popularity of home water softeners. These and other similar salts contribute to the increasing TDS levels.

4.16.2 Impacts

The major impacts of urban development and agricultural land use~~r~~s allowed by the County and City General Plans on local water resources is a steady depletion of overall groundwater quality, and the constant battle against seawater intrusion. However, overdraft of the Oxnard and Mugu aquifers beneath the Oxnard Plain ~~(essentially the Upper Aquifer System or UAS)~~ has been largely eliminated in recent years through concerted water management efforts and increased recharge activities. The Lower Aquifer System (LAS) however, remains seriously overdrafted in the southeastern Oxnard Plain and southern Pleasant Valley ~~b~~Basins and intrusion of saline water continues there and immediately surrounding the areas of Hueneme Harbor and Mugu Lagoon. Although some of the areas near the coastline that were previously thought to be seawater intruded have now been identified as dewatering of chlorides from marine clays interbedded within the sand and gravel aquifers, actual seawater intrusion still remains a real and present threat to water quality and supply volume.

Other potential impacts include contamination of surface and groundwater from urban and agricultural runoff, potential septic system failure or misuse, improperly destroyed and abandoned water wells, underground storage tanks and other various point sources. The County and City General Plans would allow growth that would require increased use of water imported from the State Water Project, adding to cumulative depletion of available water Statewide.

Groundwater Overdraft

When groundwater is pumped at a rate greater than water is recharged to the basin, an overdraft situation is created. The most severe local overdraft tends to occur in areas of heavy agricultural usage. ~~Beneath the Oxnard Plain, the Oxnard Aquifer is currently still being overdrafted, but at a rate much less than in previous years (significantly lower than the 12,400 acre-feet each year previous estimate per the *Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency Planning Study* of March 1984). Average annual overdraft between 1990 and 2000 for the Oxnard Plain and Santa Clara River Valley areas has been estimated at only 6,000 acre-feet per year (AFY) *(United Water Conservation District, Surface and Groundwater Conditions Report, September 2001).* This improved overdraft situation has resulted in a reduction from the more than 22 square miles of the Oxnard Plain being intruded by seawater, to a refined figure of only about 12.8 square miles of actual onshore seawater contamination. If the present improvement of overdraft trends continues, it is estimated that about 0.25 to 0.50 square miles per year of the aquifer would recover from seawater intrusion by the FCGMA target year of 2010.~~ There has been significant recovery of the Oxnard Aquifer since the creation of the Fox Canyon GMA and construction of the Pumping-Through Pipeline in the 1980s. Seawater intrusion in the UAS has been reversed in the Port Hueneme area. However, there still persists an area of depressed UAS water levels and seawater and saline intrusion in the vicinity of the southeastern tip of the Oxnard Plain. The depressed water levels associated with the Lower Aquifer

System (LAS) are even more pronounced and areally expansive. United WCD has used the regional groundwater model, developed by the U.S. Geological Survey, to show that there still exists an approximate 30,000 to 35,000 AFY of overdraft in the Lower Aquifer System (LAS) with the Oxnard Plain and Pleasant Valley.

Because of the ongoing overdraft of the LAS and a physical barrier within the LAS, separating the Oxnard Plain Forebay from the southern Oxnard Plain and Pleasant Valley areas, additional conjunctive use projects have been modeled and are currently being considered. Both United WCD and the City of Oxnard are evaluating projects to increase surface water deliveries to the southern half of the Oxnard Plain and Pleasant Valley. To battle the continued overdraft of the LAS from a regulatory basis, the Fox Canyon GMA and the County of Ventura have adopted a change to the County Well Ordinance that requires future replacement wells within the overdrafted area be completed in the UAS.

A remedial project locally referred to as the Seawater Intrusion Abatement Program is still underway. The County Water Quality Management (208) Plan originally outlined the adopted solution to this problem and County General Plan programs continue to assist in its implementation. This project involved construction of the Vern Freeman Diversion Structure by UWCD, which spans the Santa Clara River in the vicinity of Saticoy and diverts surface flow into the associated Pumping Trough Pipeline and expanded Springville Reservoir east of Camarillo Airport. This diverted surface water, together with groundwater from five deep PTP wells in the Fox Canyon Aquifer, is delivered to agricultural users in the Oxnard Plain who in turn ~~significantly~~ reduced use of shallow wells in the intruded Oxnard Aquifer. ~~The deep wells are presently operational, however future plans are to eventually stop using these wells to help improve overdraft of the LAS.~~ Among the Pumping Through Pipeline customers, the deep wells provide that portion of the demand not met by the diversion of Santa Clara River water. Future plans are to reduce dependence on these deep wells with new UAS wells in Saticoy. However, these deep wells will still be pumped, especially during sustained droughts.

Despite efforts by many local water interests, the Fox Canyon ~~A~~aquifer is still being overdrafted, but at a reduced rate from previous years. There is very little natural or artificial recharge to the Hueneme, Fox Canyon, and Grimes Canyon aquifers; therefore, any amount of use has the potential to result in overdraft. Groundwater supplies in outlying portions of ~~the~~ both the East and West Las Posas Basins ~~are expected to be exhausted~~ could be depleted within the next 30 to 50 years unless artificial recharge efforts to mitigate the situation are continued long-term. Overdraft in these outlying portions has been reduced from a rate of about 10,000 acre-feet per year to a more manageable 5,000 AFY.

Total groundwater overdraft Countywide has been estimated ~~anywhere between~~ to be about 20,000 to 30,000 AFY ~~and 65,000 AFY~~ depending upon annual rainfall, water management practices and implementation, and efficiency of use (includes crop trends and watering methods).

Overdraft of the Fox Canyon aquifer would continue, and accelerate, under the growth and development scenario allowed by the County and cities' General Plans. However, ~~with the managed rate of overdraft permitted by the Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency~~ with various groundwater management plans in place, supplies are expected to last at least for the next 50 to 100 years.

Water Quality Impacts

Groundwater quality is most susceptible to contamination within aquifer recharge areas (see Figure 4.16-1). These areas generally have highly permeable soils, which can readily pass surface (and subsurface) contamination to groundwater. In addition, covering over of aquifer recharge areas with non-permeable surfaces can interfere with or completely block any groundwater recharge.

Mining operations in proximity to aquifer recharge areas can potentially degrade water quality by inadequate control of fine-grained byproduct materials like dust and clays, and by pollution of return waters from gravel washing and processing operations which can increase TDS levels. Mining of materials from aquifer recharge areas can result in reduction of percolation and/or soil filtration thickness. Mining or flood control operations in river channels can affect or degrade surface water quality including increasing turbidity and downstream deposition.

The General Plan would allow limited development of septic systems. Improperly designed, installed and maintained septic systems have a great potential to contaminate groundwater and surface water supplies. Also, industrial and commercial developments dependent upon septic systems could potentially lead to degradation of groundwater supplies from intentional or unintentional discharges of hazardous wastes into these systems. The potential for groundwater contamination is greatest in aquifer recharge areas like the Oxnard Plain Forebay Basin and the Fox Canyon and Grimes Canyon aquifer outcrop zones along the north edge of the Las Posas Valley.

Because the General Plan applies the "Agricultural" designation to large portions of aquifer recharge areas, the General Plan contributes to contamination of groundwater by the nitrates and other salts contained in agricultural fertilizers, tailwater runoff and organic materials in the surface soils.

Overuse of agricultural fertilizer has been identified as a significant contributor to high nitrate levels in groundwater. Farmers consider overuse of fertilizer to be cost-effective, as the cost of overuse is less than the potential loss from underuse, and fertilizer costs comprise a relatively small portion of total production costs. The impacts to water quality from agriculture are significant and, at least in the near future, largely unavoidable. The State Water Resources Control Board is currently funding $1.2 million to research Best Management Practices (BMPs) to minimize nutrient (i.e. nitrates) and pesticide degradation of groundwater and surface water within the Oxnard Plain, Santa Clara River Valley and the Calleguas Creek Watershed.

Potential threats to groundwater quality are also posed by solid waste disposal sites via contaminated leachate or toxic gas transport through existing landfill layers. To date, no direct or significant contamination of groundwater basins has been identified in conjunction with County landfills. However, the shallow Semi-Perched ~~aquifer~~ water in the vicinity of the Coastal and Bailard landfills has been degraded, in part due to landfill leachate (California Water Quality Control Board-Los Angeles Area, 9/1/87). Fortunately, the Perched and Semi-Perched ~~aquifers~~ water on the Oxnard Plain ~~are~~ is not used for any purpose~~s~~. All landfills are subject to ongoing monitoring in compliance with Title 23 of the California Administrative Code. Development of new or expanded landfill sites will be subject to CEQA review to ensure that potential impacts are identified and, if feasible, mitigated.

Water Supply

The Ventura County 2000 Water Survey (Figure 4.16-2) and Figures 4.16-3 through 4.16-5 depict water supply, demand and use projection within the County through the year 2020. These statistics indicate that within each wholesale water district service area, sufficient water supplies are available to meet the projected demands through the year 2020. However, water supplies are not evenly distributed among the various retail purveyors and individual consumers within the district boundaries, such that future water shortages may arise in localized areas. In addition, estimates of supply and demand are, in some cases, imprecise. The demand projections for Casitas MWD and the supply projections for United WCD contain two sets of figures: the County prepared estimates and the estimates appearing in the report *Feasibility of Importing State Project Water Into Ventura County* by James M. Montgomery Consulting Engineers (1987). The "feasibility" values reflect a future shortage of water in the Casitas and United areas, whereas the County values indicate a gross water surplus (notwithstanding localized shortages).

Because the population growth and development (including expansion of agriculture) allowed by the General Plan would increase demand for water in areas where shortages may arise, the General Plan contributes to the cumulative water shortage in some parts of the County. In addition, in some areas, insufficient water may constrain the level of development that would otherwise be allowed by the County General Plan. The following paragraphs discuss areas of the County where water shortages could potentially occur.

Within the Casitas MWD boundaries, sufficient supplies of water currently exist to meet future demand if urban growth supplants irrigated agricultural acreage as projected by the County (see Figure 4.16-3), however a shortfall of up to 6,000 AF/year would arise by the year 2020 if current consumption rates continue and urban growth does not supplant agricultural usage.

The Casitas MWD in 1987 (an unusually dry year) supplied the entire "safe yield" of the lake (Steve Wickstrum, CMWD, 10/12/87). Ostensibly, this would indicate an inability to serve future increased demand in a year of similarly low precipitation. However, several ameliorating factors must be considered. Casitas has concluded that the "safe yield" of the lake could safely be exceeded on occasion depending on long-term meteorological trends and forecasts. Conjunctive use involves a "pooling" of water resources, which takes advantage of seasonal fluctuations in flows and capacities in order to maximize yield. The Casitas MWD may be able to enter into conjunctive use agreements with groundwater users within the District, which would result in additional increases in effective supply. It should be noted that in relatively wet years, such as 1983 and 1986, Casitas supplied considerably less than the safe yield of the lake.

Nevertheless, the possibility remains that, in periods of drought, water shortages exacerbated by the population allowed by the General Plan could occur. The Casitas MWD has adopted principles and guidelines for contending with a water shortage emergency. It is expected that implementation of these measures would ensure sufficient supplies of water for life sustainment, perhaps at the expense of depriving urban landscaping, the oil industry and agriculture (in that order). Consequently, it must be concluded that the increase in population allowed by the General Plan could have a cumulatively significant impact on water supply, and indirectly on agriculture within the Casitas MWD.

Within the United WCD, sufficient supplies of water are available to meet the gross increase in demand within the District boundaries if the groundwater yield of the Santa Clara Valley remains at present levels (as projected by the County PWA, see Figure 4.16-4). The "Feasibility" report (by Montgomery Engineers) concludes that the safe yield of Santa Clara Valley groundwater is 33,000 AF/year less than the~~ present (~~1985~~)~~ pumpage, resulting in a shortage of 25,000 acre-feet in the year 2000, decreasing to 20,000 AF in 2020. In stark contrast to the "Feasibility" report, detailed basin yield analysis and other studies by United Water and others over the last 10 years have shown that the basins along the Santa Clara River Valley have not been and are not in overdraft. These basins, Piru, Fillmore, and Santa Paula, are subject to dropping groundwater levels during dry periods and experience rapid recovery of groundwater levels during wet years. The Superior Court of California mandated 2003 report, "Investigation of Santa Paula Basin Yield" by experts for the City of San Buenaventura, United Water, and the Santa Paula Basin Pumpers Association, found that the yield of Santa Paula basin to be in excess of 25,900 AF/year. Analysis of long-term groundwater level and groundwater quality data shows that the yields for the Piru and Fillmore basins are in excess of 12,500 AF/yr and 44,800 AF/yr respectively. These data are available in the "Piru and Fillmore Basins Groundwater Conditions Report." United WCD publishes this report annually for the AB-3030 Groundwater Management Council for these two basins.

Total supplies are anticipated to be adequate to serve the total projected growth within the United WCD. Planned improvements now in process will provide the infrastructure necessary to provide water supplies to serve projected (planned) growth in the City of Ventura and outlying unincorporated areas served by City water. The Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency and the Santa Paula Basin Settlement Agreement control the use of water from basins outside City limits.

Another major area of potential water shortage is the Las Posas Valley. There, groundwater supplies are expected to be seriously depleted prior to 2020, especially in the West Las Posas Groundwater Basin. This shortage would be partially offset by the Calleguas MWD East Las Posas Basin Aquifer Storage and Recovery project currently near final completion~~s~~ stage~~s~~. Even this very costly and ambitious project is dependent upon surplus and relatively inexpensive imported State Project water during winter periods when and if it becomes available.

The areas of the County outside the major water district boundaries primarily rely upon groundwater as their water source. There is a real possibility that sufficient water supplies may not be available to serve the development that would otherwise by allowed by the General Plan in these areas. The Santa Monica Mountains for example, relies entirely upon groundwater. This water is generally contained only within the few and limited fractures hidden in the underlying bedrock rather than the classic sand/silt/gravel type aquifers, and reserves in this area have never been quantified. Sufficient and sustained long-term water supplies may not be available to serve the maximum level of development that would be allowed by the County General Plan in this area.

Throughout most of the North Half of the County, limited water supplies pose a constraint to development. In the Lockwood Valley, sufficient water may not be available to serve the level of development that would otherwise be allowed on existing lots, depending on the amount consumed for irrigation. The General Plan, however, restricts further land divisions in that particular area. In the Cuyama Valley, the issue is more one of sufficient quality of water rather than quantity, so development constraints should be considered in this area as well.

Cumulative Depletion of State Water

The Calleguas MWD relies entirely on imported water for its supply. Increased use is projected for the future.

The proposed amendments to the Countywide General Plan *Goals, Policies and Programs* address recent changes in State law that apply to water supply and facilities. Among these amendments is a policy ~~that~~ which states that development that requires potable water shall be provided a permanent potable water supply of adequate quantity and quality for the life of the project that complies with applicable County and State water regulations.

Water systems operated by or receiving water from the Calleguas Municipal Water District and the United Water Conservation District will be considered permanent water supplies unless an Urban Water Management Plan (prepared pursuant to Part 2.6 of Division 6 of the Water Code) or a water supply and demand assessment (prepared pursuant to Part 2.10 of Division 6 of the Water Code) demonstrates that there is insufficient water supply to serve cumulative development within the district's service area. When the proposed water supply is to be drawn exclusively from wells in areas where groundwater supplies have been determined by the Environmental Health Division or the Public Works Agency to be questionable or inadequate, the developer shall be required to demonstrate the availability of a permanent potable water supply for the life of the project.

Additionally, another new policy is proposed such that discretionary development as defined in section 10912 of the Water Code shall comply with the water supply and demand assessment requirements of Part 2.10 of Division 6 of the Water Code.

Although the California State Water Project has received additional funds through bond sales and short-term commercial paper notes for the construction of additional storage and transmission systems, and has added some additional water sources, the State Water Project is still over ~~prescribed~~ -allocated. Thus, the increased consumption of imported water by development in the cities and unincorporated lands of Ventura County will contribute to the cumulative shortfall in available water statewide and will contribute to the need for further construction of additional water supply facilities. A shortfall in water supply may result in a reduction of the water available for agriculture statewide and locally; thus, increased urban use of imported water may adversely affect agriculture by limiting water availability. Therefore, the increased use of imported water by development allowed by the cities' and County General Plans is considered a cumulatively significant impact.

4.16.3 Mitigation Measures

The County, together with various other agencies, is involved in several programs designed to contend with water quantity and quality problems. The ultimate effectiveness of these programs will be generally contingent upon availability of funds. Implementation of innovative measures may also require establishment of unprecedented levels of cooperation and coordination among the myriad water agencies and between water users and landowners. These ongoing programs are summarized below. More detailed descriptions appear in the County General Plan *Public Facilities and Services Appendix*, Section 4.3.

The Water Quality Management (208) Plan – The Federally-mandated 208 Plan contains regional policies for protection of water quality and groundwater resources. Various assumptions of the Water Quality Management Plan are based upon the population/land use forecasts of the County. These same forecasts guide the Land Use Chapter of the *Goals, Policies and Programs* and appear in the *Land Use Appendix* of the General Plan.

Seawater Intrusion Abatement Program – A joint venture between the County, United Water Conservation District and the Cities of Oxnard and Ventura, this project is designed to curtail overdrafting of both the Upper and Lower Aquifer Systems (UAS and LAS), containing the Oxnard, & Mugu aquifers (UAS), and the Hueneme, Fox Canyon, and Grimes Canyon Aquifers (LAS) by developing use of Santa Clara River water to replace use of wells within the Oxnard Plain. The Santa Clara River water is supplemented by deep wells within the Fox Canyon aquifer, and some reclaimed water (most recently from a new diversion structure on Conejo Creek). Use of Santa Clara River water was made possible by construction of the Freeman Diversion Structure, and use of deep groundwater via the 5 wells contributing to the Pumping Trough Pipeline (or PTP). General Plan program 1.3.3-1 requires continued support of the Seawater Intrusion Abatement Program. United Water Conservation District ~~is planning~~ has completed a new shallow well extraction field near Saticoy to utilize water from the Upper Aquifer System (UAS) which is more easily replenished than deeper water sources. This lessens the use of overdrafted Lower Aquifer System (LAS) water and helps correct the seawater intrusion problem in the LAS. In addition, drilling of new wells in the LAS is prohibited by the County Well Ordinance and the County Water Resources Division is aggressively pursuing the proper destruction of unused and abandoned wells to prevent saline contamination and other pollution sources from negatively impacting local water resources. Imposition of annual pumping allocations and periodic scheduled reductions in those allocations by the Fox Canyon GMA has also helped to control and limit the extent of seawater intrusion.

Wastewater Reclamation – The "Countywide Wastewater Reuse Study" identified several potential projects for use of reclaimed water. The most promising projects involve the use of wastewater from the Hill Canyon and Simi Valley treatment plans for irrigation in the Oxnard Plain and Las Posas Valley, respectively. The County is spearheading the effort to implement these projects and is presently seeking State and Federal funding. General Plan programs 1.3.3-7 and 4.3.3-2 address water reclamation. The Hill Canyon WWTP effluent has been fully utilized by construction of the Conejo Creek Diversion. This joint project was funded by Calleguas MWD, designed, built, and operated by the Camrosa Water District, using water rights owned by the City of Thousand Oaks. It provides supplemental irrigation water primarily to farms in the Pleasant Valley Groundwater Basin, thus reducing water well use in the area where cutbacks in pumping are needed most. Sufficient customers have not been secured in the Simi and Moorpark areas to warrant construction of pipelines needed to convey recycled wastewater to the end user, so those supplies have not yet been developed to their full potential.

Water Conservation – The "County Water Conservation Plan" identifies numerous means to conserve water. The County Planning Division implements water conservation measures through its *Landscape Design Criteria* (program 1.3.3-6) and the Building & Safety Division implements the County's Efficient Plumbing Devices Ordinance (program 4.3.3-3). Various water districts and suppliers also periodically distribute low-flow shower heads, faucet flow restrictors, and conduct toilet replacement programs to help get low-volume flush models into older existing homes. The County Watershed Protection District and the Ojai Basin GMA among others participate in the County Fair and other venues to help promote water conservation and education programs.

Importation of State Water Project Water – The City of Ventura, Casitas Municipal Water District and United Water Conservation District periodically discuss the feasibility of importing 20,000 AF/yr of State water to which they hold a combined or joint entitlement. Many ideas, means, and proposals concerning how such water could be obtained (if available) have been offered up over the last couple of decades, however a consensus has never been reached. ~~The only portion of this entitlement that enters the county on an infrequent basis is the less than 5,000 AF/year that United WCD obtains from releases at Like Pyramid that flow down Piru Creek into Lake Piru.~~ United Water has begun ordering SWP water on an annual basis. Port Hueneme currently imports 1,850 AFY of United Water's entitlement, and United Water has been ordering the remaining 3,150 AFY. When hydrologic conditions dictate, United Water plans to order a portion of the City of San Buenaventura's entitlement that has not been ordered by the City. ~~The end use of this water is for groundwater replenishment along the Santa Clara River corridor and some minimal surface water diversions to supplement agricultural irrigation needs adjacent to the~~

~~river.~~ Water is released from Lake Piru with the express purpose of getting water to United's Saticoy facility further downstream in the Forebay Groundwater Basin. Depending on existing hydrologic conditions in the Santa Clara River Valley, either a greater or lesser percentage of the released water will get to the Freeman Diversion, near Saticoy, within a couple of weeks. Some percolation loss of the released water during transport down the Santa Clara River benefits groundwater levels along the stream course. In time, the released water lost to the upper basins will subsequently discharge back to the river in the western ends of both the Piru and Fillmore basins. Over a period of a few years, the released water lost to the upper basin makes its way to the Freeman Diversion.

Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency – The (FCGMA) was created by State legislation in 1982 to manage groundwater with the objective of controlling overdraft and seawater intrusion. The FCGMA has prepared a plan for this purpose ~~which~~ that is being implemented by the County, cities and various water agencies. Staffing for the FCGMA is provided by the County Public Works Agency through a contractual agreement with the agency. General Plan program 1.3.3-3 requires continued support of the FCGMA Plan.

In addition to the above programs, the *Goals, Policies and Programs* of the County General Plan contain the following policies, which apply to discretionary development in the unincorporated area of the County:

1.3.2-1 *Discretionary development* which is inconsistent with the goals and policies of the County's Water Management Plan (WMP) shall be prohibited, unless overriding considerations are cited by the decision-making body.

1.3.2-2 *Discretionary development* shall comply with all applicable County and State water regulations.

1.3.2-3 The installation of *on-site septic systems* shall meet all applicable State and County regulations.

1.3.2-4 *Discretionary development* shall not significantly impact the quantity or quality of water resources within watersheds, groundwater recharge areas or groundwater basins.

1.3.2-5 Landscape plans for *discretionary development* shall incorporate water conservation measures as prescribed by the County's Guide to Landscape Plans, including use of low water usage landscape plants and irrigation systems and/or low water usage plumbing fixtures and other measures designed to reduce water usage.

1.3.2-6 The use of the Santa Clara River as a multiple resource (i.e., source of supply for water, concrete aggregates and biological habitat) shall be permitted to continue; with the use of the River as a water resource having priority over all other uses.

1.3.2-7 Out-of-river mining below the historic or predicted high groundwater level in the Del Norte/El Rio (Oxnard Forebay Basin) area may be permitted if the applicant can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the County of Ventura that the excavation activity will not interfere with or affect groundwater quality and quantity.

1.3.2-8 All *discretionary development* shall be conditioned for the proper drilling and construction of new oil, gas and water wells and destruction of all abandoned wells on-site.

1.3.2-9 New wells in the Oxnard Plain Pressure Basin shall not be allowed if they would increase seawater intrusion in the Oxnard or Mugu aquifers. New or replacement wells that intend to be perforated and draw from the LAS anywhere in Sealing Zone III (essentially the previously mentioned basin) must first pass strict conditions put in place and administered by the FCGMA in conjunction with the County Well Ordinance.

1.3.2-10 All new golf courses shall be conditioned to prohibit landscape irrigation with water from groundwater basins or inland surface waters identified as Municipal and Domestic Supply or Agricultural Supply in the California Regional Water Quality Control Board's Water Quality Control Plan unless either: a) the existing and planned water supplies for a Hydrologic Area, including inter-related Hydrologic Areas and Subareas, are shown to be adequate to meet the

projected demands for existing uses as well as reasonably foreseeable probable future uses within the area, or b) it is demonstrated that the total groundwater extraction/recharge for the golf course will be equal to or less than the historic groundwater extraction/recharge (as defined in the Ventura County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines) for the site. Where feasible, reclaimed water shall be utilized for new golf courses.

4.3.2-1 All *development* ~~which~~ that requires potable water shall be provided a permanent potable water supply of adequate quantity and quality. Water systems operated by or receiving water from Casitas Municipal Water District, the Calleguas Municipal Water District or the United Water Conservation District will be considered permanent supplies unless determined otherwise by the district. When the proposed water supply is to be drawn exclusively from wells in areas where groundwater supplies have been determined by the Environmental Health Division or the Public Works Agency to be questionable as to quality or inadequate as to quantity, the developer shall be required to demonstrate the availability of a permanent potable water supply for the life of the project. Pump tests to show adequate sustained well volume and/or water quality tests are the most common procedures used to prove availability of a permanent potable water supply.

4.3.2-2 *Discretionary development* shall be conditioned to incorporate water *conservation* techniques and the use of drought resistant native plants pursuant to the County's Guide to Landscape Plans.

These policies mitigate the impact of discretionary development in the unincorporated area of the County on water resources and supply to a less-than-significant level. Cumulatively, ministerial development and development within incorporated cities has the potential to result in significant adverse impacts to water resources, so they may not be mitigated to a less-than-significant level.

4.16.4 Residual, Unavoidable Impacts

The above-mentioned mitigation programs and policies could reduce the impacts of discretionary development in the unincorporated area of the County on water resources and supply to a less than significant level. Cumulatively, ministerial development and development within the cities are not subject to the policies of the County General Plan; therefore, the potential for significant, unmitigated impacts remain. The water quality impact from agricultural runoff and leachate from septic systems is a significant impact that will remain unavoidable, at least in the short-term. Progress is being made however in the area of agricultural runoff due to recent programs and laws instituted by the State Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCB's), along with the county and city National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) programs. Septic system use has also been reduced somewhat since the Los Angeles RWQCB ordered all individual septic systems removed from the Oxnard Plain Forebay Basin by 2008. Many neighborhoods in the unincorporated area of El Rio and within the industrial areas along both sides of Vineyard Avenue north of the City of Oxnard have connected to municipal sewer systems, and the remaining areas should all be connected within the time limit allowed. Cumulative demands on the State Water Project will remain significant.

Figure 4.16-1
Water Resources – South Half

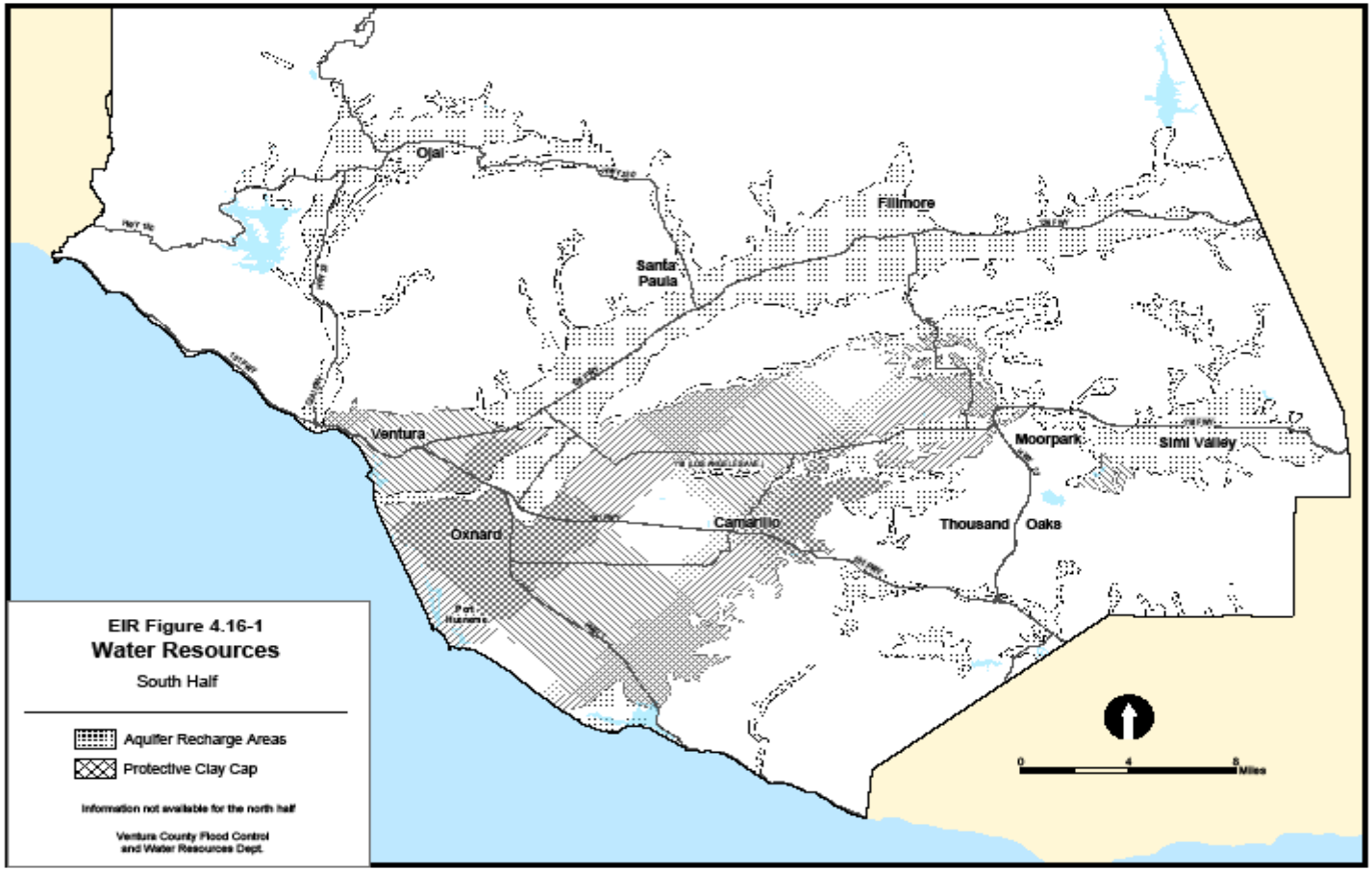


Figure 4.16-2
Ventura County 2000 Water Survey

City	Population[1]	M & I[2] Water Use (Acre feet)[3]	Average Per Capita Water Use (Acre feet/year)	Notes
Camarillo	58,817	9,970	0.23	Average for 1992-2000
Fillmore	14,096	1,925	0.19	Average for 1992-2000
Moorpark	32,151	9,133	0.28	Average for 1992-2000
Unincorporated	94,431	2,400	0.22	Average for 1992-2000
Ojai	7,970	2,536	0.24	Average for 1992-2000
Oxnard	177,700	25,722	0.15	Average for 1992-2000
Port Hueneme	22,249	3,218	0.14	Average for 1996-2000
Santa Paula	29,303	4,041	0.18	Average for 1992-2000
Simi Valley	114,837	28,269	0.22	Average for 1992-2000
Thousand Oaks[6]	119,411	39,402	0.18	Average for 1992-2000
Ventura	102,574	17,084	0.20	Average for 1992-2000
AGGREGATE[7] Total or Average	**773,539**	**108,640**	**0.21**	Average for 1992-2000

[1]California Dept. of Finance Population Estimates.
[2]Municipal and Industrial Water Use.
[3]One Acre Foot = 325,851 gallons.
[4]Camarillo Population and Water Use includes portions outside the city limits that are served by the Camrosa Water District.
[5]Oak Park, Lockwood Valley, Oak View, Meiners Oaks, Piru, Upper Ojai, and North or South Coasts are main Unincorporated Growth Areas.
[6]Thousand Oaks Population and Water Use includes Newbury Park which is served by the California-American Water Company.
[7]Does Not Include Non-Growth Areas outside cities.

Figure 4.16-3a
Water Demand Projections Within Casitas MWD
(Acre-Feet Per Year)

Year	Population[1]	M & I Demand[2]	Agricultural Acres[3]	Agricultural Demand[4]	Oil Company Demand[5]	Unaccounted Water[6]	Total Demand
1990	58,208	12,806	717	1,434	4,500	1,170	19,910
2000	63,934	14,065	717	1,434	4,500	1,190	21,192
2010	68,557	15,083	717	1,434	4,500	1,210	22,227
2020	73,137	16,090	717	1,434	4,500	1,230	23,254

[1]Based on Countywide population forecast adopted by Ventura Council of Governments on May 24, 2001.
[2]Municipal and Industrial demand, based on population forecast times per capita M & I use factor (0.22 acre-feet per person per year) taken from Ventura County Water Conservation Management Plan.
[3]Source: General Plan Land Use Appendix.
[4]Based on water use factor of 2.0 acre-feet per acre per year.
[5]Source: Report on Feasibility of Importing Water into Ventura County (1987).
[6]Source: Report on Feasibility of Importing Water into Ventura County (1987).

Figure 4.16-3b
Water Supply Projections Within Casitas MWD
(Acre-Feet Per Year)

Year	Groundwater[1]	Lake Casitas (City Portion)[1]	Lake Casitas (Remainder)[1]	Imported (State) Water	Recycled Water[2]	Total Supply
1990	10,000	6,175	10,550	0	1,300	28,025
2000	10,000	5,836	10,350	0	1,600	27,786
2010	10,000	8,000	10,350	0	1,600	29,950
2020	10,000	8,000	10,350	0	1,600	29,950

[1]Source: Report on Feasibility of Importing State Project Water into Ventura County (1987), Table 3-1. All groundwater is pumped by retail purveyors and individuals separate from Casitas MWD.
[2]Source: 1980 208 Water Quality Management Plan, Appendix IV, Table 9.

Figure 4.16-4a
Water Demand Projections Within United WCD
(Acre-Feet Per Year)

Year	Population[1]	M & I Demand[2]	Ag. Acres[3]	Ag. Demand[4]	Unaccounted Water[5]	Total Demand
1990	291,249	55,337	68,234	186,279	3,760	245,376
2000	315,552	59,955	68,234	186,279	4,530	250,764
2010	349,506	66,406	68,234	186,279	5,090	257,775
2020	390,113	74,121	68,234	186,279	5,650	266,050

[1]Based on Countywide population forecasts, adopted by Ventura Council of Governments on May 24, 2001.
[2]Municipal and Industrial demand, based on population forecast times per capita M & I use factor (0.19 acre-feet per person per year).
[3]Source: General Plan Land Use Appendix.
[4]Based on water use factor of 2.73 acre-feet per acre per year.
[5]Values are M & I losses only, based on reported data in Urban Water Management Plans for water agencies within the United District.

Figure 4.16-4b
Water Supply Projections Within United WCD
(Acre-Feet Per Year)

	Santa Clara Valley		Coastal Plain			
Year	Surface[1]	Ground[2]	Surface[3]	Ground[4]	Imported[5]	Total Supply
1990	12,000	~~106,450~~ 83,200	25,950	113,400	21,840	~~279,640~~ 256,390
2000	12,000	~~106,450~~ 83,200	26,100	113,600	25,550	~~283,700~~ 260,450
2010	12,000	~~106,450~~ 83,200	26,230	113,000	29,370	~~287,050~~ 263,800
2020	12,000	~~106,450~~ 83,200	26,370	113,000	33,190	~~291,010~~ 267,760

Source: Report on Feasibility of Importing State Project Water into Ventura County (1987), Table 3-3.
[1]Surface water diversions were over 12,000 acre-feet per year ending July 1, 1985, according to United's annual report on groundwater conditions.
[2]Based on ~~safe~~ basin yield ~~estimates from available references~~ analysis for the Santa Paula basin and analysis of long-term groundwater level and groundwater quality data for Piru and Fillmore basins.
[3]Coastal Plain surface water includes the Pleasant Valley pipeline, the Oxnard-Port Hueneme pipeline (yield from surface water although extracted from groundwater), the Pumping Trough Pipeline (50% of maximum supply assumed to be surface water), and reclaimed water from the City.
[4]Values based on GMA approximated restrictions (including overdraft) on Coastal Plain basins (Task 86-3) plus amounts from the Mound Basin in the City.
[5]Includes supplies imported by the City from the Ventura River Foster Park facilities and those imported by Oxnard from Calleguas, assuming supply of two-thirds of Oxnard's demand by Calleguas.

Figure 4.16-5a
Water Demand Projections Within Calleguas MWD*
(Acre-Feet Per Year)

Year	Population[1]	M & I Demand[2]	Ag. Acres[3]	Ag. Demand[4]	Total Demand
1990	314,764	78,691	23,730	47,460	126,151
2000	359,762	89,941	23,730	47,460	137,401
2010	412,447	103,112	23,730	47,460	150,572
2020	445,698	111,425	23,730	47,460	158,885

[1]Based on Countywide population forecast, adopted by Ventura Council of Governments on May 24, 2001.
[2]Municipal and industrial demand, based on population forecast times per capita M & I use factor (0.25 acre-feet per person per year, compiled by Public Works Agency in August 1987 from averages obtained from 1985 Water Use Survey).
[3]Source: General Plan Land Use Appendix.
[4]Based on Agricultural Water Demand Factor (2.0 acre-feet per acre per year from County Water Conservation Management Plan, 1983).
*Excluding the City of Oxnard.

Figure 4.16-5b
Water Supply Projections Within Calleguas MWD
(Acre-Feet Per Year)

Year	Groundwater[1]	Surface Water[2]	Imported[3]	Recycled[4]	Total Supply
1990	79,750	900	190,000	1,725	272,375
2000	79,750	900	190,000	26,475	297,125
2010	79,750	900	190,000	26,475	297,125
2020	79,750	900	190,000	26,475	297,125

[1]Based on estimate of 273,000 acre-feet per year Countywide, less the groundwater supply projections for Casitas and United. Amount shown in this projection is pumped by individuals and agencies other than Calleguas MWD.
[2]Source: 1980 208 Water Quality Management Plan, Appendix IV, Table 9.
[3]Ibid
[4]Assumes continuation of current reclamation at Camarillo and Camrosa wastewater treatment plants.

4.17 Waste Treatment and Disposal

Waste is generally divided into two categories; liquid wastes and solid wastes. Liquid wastes are treated by two principal means; individual sewage disposal systems (e.g., septic systems) and sewage treatment facilities (e.g., community sewer systems, off-site liquid waste disposal). Solid wastes entail both a project's demand for collection, recycling and disposal services and facilities, and the impacts from the location and operation solid waste facilities (e.g., recycling centers, landfills). The County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines contain the following criteria for determining significant impacts:

Individual Sewage Disposal Systems

An on-site system which disposes of domestic waste (sewage) generated by individual residences and businesses located in areas without access to public sewer service. These are also referred to as septic systems and onsite sewage disposal systems.

Compliance with applicable sections of the following codes, policies, manuals and plans must be demonstrated:

- Ventura County Building Code
- Ventura County Sewer Policy
- Ventura County Ordinance Code
- Uniform Plumbing Code
- Environmental Health Division Individual Sewage Disposal System Technical Information Manual
- Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board Basin Plan.

By meeting these codes, policies, manuals and plans, a project would not have a significant adverse impact.

Sewage Treatment Facilities

Sewage treatment facilities are those that collect wastewater from domestic, commercial, industrial and institutional uses, treat it to remove organic and inorganic hazardous or noxious waste materials, and discharge the treated effluent into the environment. Sewage treatment facilities that serve off-site properties are categorized as "community sewage treatment facilities" by the County General Plan (Goals, Policies and Programs, Glossary).

Any project that would individually or cumulatively generate sewage effluent which would be discharged to and exceed the capacity of an existing sewer main or sewage treatment plant would have a potentially significant impact. If the project description includes improvements to existing, or construction of new, sewer mains and/or sewage treatment plants which would then be capable of serving the project and other cumulative development, there would be a less that significant impact. These improvements/new facilities, however, must also be assessed for possible impacts on other environmental issues.

Solid Waste Management

Sufficient permitted solid waste disposal capacity must be available to accommodate the solid waste disposal needs of all new projects.

California law requires county governments to prepare and adopt a Countywide Siting Element (CSE) as part of their Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan (CIWMP). The CSE "shall demonstrate that there is a countywide or region-wide minimum of 15 years of combined permitted disposal capacity, through existing or planned solid waste disposal and transformation facilities or through additional strategies." (Title 14, Chapter 9, Article 6.5, Section 18755)

Many landfills are privately owned and operated, as are many refuse disposal companies that deliver waste to landfills. Federal commerce laws are such that landfills are generally free to accept refuse from geographical areas beyond the one in which the facility is located. And refuse haulers are also free to take waste to whatever disposal facility they choose. Market forces, therefore, play a large role in determining the extent to which waste disposal capacity is available in any given county or region of the state.

So while counties are responsible for *planning for* adequate permitted disposal capacity, they have no statutory authority to direct or restrict the flow of waste to disposal facilities, and thereby to ensure disposal capacity. Counties must therefore base their disposal capacity plans on existing market conditions, and knowledge about facility development and expansion plans. If this information reveals that there may be less than 15 years of disposal capacity available to the county, then the county must develop strategies to address this shortfall.

Any project that generates solid waste will have an impact on the demand for solid waste disposal capacity in Ventura County. However, unless the county has reason to believe that there is less than 15 years of disposal capacity available for county disposal, no individual project would have a significant impact on the demand for solid waste disposal capacity. In addition, Ventura County Ordinance 4155 minimizes the potential solid waste disposal capacity impacts for any project by mandating the recycling of materials found on the "Director's List of Recyclables."

Solid Waste Facilities

Solid waste operations and facilities are those projects that involve solid waste handling, storage, processing and disposal activities.

Solid waste facilities shall be in compliance with the following statues and regulations and are subject to enforcement by the EHD/LEA:

- California Health and Safety Code
- California Code of Regulations, Title 14
- California Code of Regulations, Title 27
- California Public Resources Code

4.17.1 Environmental Setting

A detailed discussion of the Environmental Setting for waste treatment and disposal facilities is described in the proposed update to Section 4.4. of the *Public Facilities and Services Appendix* of the General Plan. A summary of the environmental setting for waste treatment/disposal is as follows:

On-Site Septic Systems (Individual Sewage Disposal Systems)

*On-site septic systems***,** also referred to as individual sewage disposal systems (ISDS), are those on-site liquid waste systems that dispose of sewage generated by individual residences and businesses in areas not served by a community sewage treatment facility. A conventional ISDS usually includes a septic tank and either seepage pit or leach lines. Mound systems and subsurface sand filtration systems are two alternative ISDS may be approved for use in areas where there are shallow soils over bedrock, high groundwater (either seasonal or permanent), or fractured bedrock. They are restricted for use only under specific conditions and guidelines in those areas of the County where community sewer systems are not available and on-site conditions preclude the use of conventional septic tank/soil absorption systems. Only domestic sewage (i.e. human waste from everyday living activities) can be discharged into a septic system. Businesses may not dispose of hazardous waste or materials in a septic system.

The siting criteria used to determine whether a lot is suitable for an ISDS include the size of the lot, the tested soil absorption rate, the depth to groundwater, the setback from surface waters and wells, and the topography and geology of the lot. Refer to Figure 4.4.2 of the proposed *Public Facilities and Services Appendix* for a map indicating areas in the County with severe septic system limitations.

These siting criteria are based on the *California Plumbing Code* as incorporated into the *Ventura County Building Code* and further detailed in the Ventura County Environmental Health Division *ISDS Technical Information Manual*.

A Registered Civil Engineer must design mound and subsurface filtration systems. The County requires that such systems be officially documented on the deed of the property on which they are installed plus the property owner proposing an alternate system must grant an easement to County Service Area (CSA) 32 or another public agency capable of providing maintenance or monitoring services. County Service Area No. 32 was formed to ensure that privately owned ISDS are properly maintained. CSA 32 is administered through the County Environmental Health Division. The design engineer must verify in writing that the system was installed as designed.

As of 2000, it is estimated there are in excess of 16,500 ISDS located Countywide.

(County of Ventura. Proposed Amendments to *Public Facilities and Services Appendix.* p 51).

Sewage Treatment Facilities

These facilities include 14 Community Sewage Treatment Facilities, treating liquid waste received from off-site and the various on-site Wastewater Treatment Facilities (such as at Thomas Aquinas College, Thatcher School and the Ventura County Todd Road Jail). All are regulated by local, state and federal agencies to protect the County's surface and groundwater from biological and chemical pollutants. The 14 Community Sewage Treatment Facilities within Ventura County are:

1. Camarillo Sanitary District Water Reclamation Plant
2. Camrosa Water Reclamation Facility
3. Fillmore Wastewater Treatment Plant
4. Limoneira Wastewater Treatment Plant
5. Montalvo Municipal Improvement District Treatment Facility
6. Moorpark Wastewater Treatment Plant (Ventura County Waterworks District No. 1)
7. Ojai Valley Sanitary District Wastewater Treatment Plant
8. Oxnard Wastewater Treatment Plant
9. Piru Wastewater Treatment Plant (Ventura County Waterworks District No. 16)
10. Santa Paula Wastewater Treatment Plant
11. Saticoy Sanitary District Wastewater Treatment Plant
12. Simi Valley County Sanitation District Water Quality Control Plant
13. Thousand Oaks – Hill Canyon Wastewater Treatment Plant
14. Ventura Water ~~Renovation~~ Reclamation Facility

In addition, a number of County residents within the Triunfo Sanitation District (Southeast Ventura County) are served (via a reciprocal agreement with the Las Virgenes Sanitation District) by the Tapia Wastewater Treatment Plant in Los Angeles County. The Triunfo District owns the sewer lines within Ventura County and the Ventura Regional Sanitation District is the administrator.

Residents in the County's North Coast area, excluding Rincon Point and La Conchita, are served (liquid waste only) by County Service Area (CSA) 29 sewer facilities that connect to City of Ventura sewers and the Ventura Water Renovation Facility.

Residents and businesses in the County's Nyeland Acres area are served by County CSA 30 sewer facilities that connect to City of Oxnard sewers and the Oxnard Wastewater Treatment Plant. The Water and Sanitation Division of the County of Ventura manages CSA 29 and CSA 30.

Solid Waste Facilities

Offsite waste treatment facilities are those facilities that accept wastes from outside their permit boundaries for treatment to change the physical, chemical or biological characteristics of the waste so as to render it less harmful to the quality of the waters of the state, safer to handle, easier to contain or manage, including use as a fuel, nutrient or soil amendment.

Two existing non-hazardous offsite waste treatment sites currently handle liquid industrial wastes. These facilities, and the wastes they currently accept for processing, are noted below:

- Santa Clara Waste Water Company treats industrial and residential non-hazardous liquid waste; the liquid is then piped to the City of Oxnard Waste Treatment Plant for further treatment.
- Anterra Services, Inc. provides on-shore and off-shore waste management services to the oil and gas industry, including Class II Commercial Injection Disposal.

Solid waste disposal sites are those facilities for the final deposition of wastes onto land. Wastes are categorized by the state into four general types: Hazardous, Designated, Municipal, and Inert Waste.

There are no disposal facilities in Ventura County for Hazardous Waste or certain types of Designated Waste. These must be transported outside the County for disposal. The Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan (CIWMP), incorporated by reference in this report, is the planning, administrative, and implementation guide for Ventura County solid waste disposal facilities. The planning horizon for the CIWMP extends to 2015. The Countywide Siting Element of the CIWMP provides an estimate of the remaining capacity of existing solid waste disposal facilities.

Permitted solid waste disposal facilities are located at the following sites:

- Simi Landfill and Recycling Center – Accepts Non-Hazardous and Inert Wastes.
- Toland Road Landfill – Accepts Municipal Waste.

Harrison Industries' Gold Coast Transfer Station in the City of Ventura and the Del Norte Transfer Station in the City of Oxnard provide transfer and recycling services. Gold Coast has a capacity of 1,200 tons per day of waste and 300 tons per day for recyclables. Del Norte's capacity is 2,700 tons per day total. Waste is then transferred to local landfills.

4.17.2 Impacts

Future development in the unincorporated areas will require additional Individual Sewage Disposal Systems (ISDS), sewage treatment facilities (community and on-site), solid waste facilities (offsite waste treatment facilities, solid waste disposal sites, and waste transfer stations), or expansion of existing facilities.

Individual Sewage Disposal Systems

The relatively small population growth projected for unincorporated areas with Agricultural, Open Space and Rural land use designations will result in the construction of some Individual Sewage Disposal Systems (ISDS). Unincorporated areas with Existing Community or Urban land use designations may also see incremental growth in the number of ISDS facilities. However, as indicated by EIR Figure 4.17-1 (Septic System Limitation map), many parts of Ventura County have geologic conditions that limit the placement of new ISDS. These limitations may be due to high groundwater, excessive slope, fractured bedrock and impervious soils. Except in the case of impervious soils, an ISDS design can usually be accommodated with proper engineering. The Ventura County Environmental Health Division reviews soils characteristics and design of every ISDS in order to ensure that the systems will operate effectively and that no threat is posed to public health.

There are existing systems in the County that were not built to current code requirements. Potential problems include improper design, inadequate lot size, steep terrain, impervious soils or other factors. Although such systems may tend to degrade groundwater quality, their impacts are relatively small and are generally remedied when these buildings are remodeled.

There are areas of the County of Ventura that are experiencing degradation of groundwater quality from septic systems. This degradation is primarily from an increase in nitrates. Nitrates are naturally occurring chemicals found in drinking water that can be elevated in groundwater supplies through liquid effluent contributions from the individual septic systems required for main dwelling units and second dwelling units not connected to a sanitary sewer system or from overuse of agricultural fertilizers. The California State Department of Health Services set the public water supply maximum contaminant level for nitrates in drinking water at 45 milligrams per liter. The County adopted these standards because containing nitrates at or below this level provides a margin of safety against a significant public health risk.

Research has shown a direct link between elevated nitrates in drinking water and methemoglobinemia or "blue baby" syndrome which results from the nitrate replacing the iron in a patient's bloodstream. Populations that are particularly sensitive to this blood disorder include infants less than six months old, pregnant women and people with stomach ulcers or intestinal tract sensitivity (Ziebarth. *Well Water, Nitrates and the "Blue Baby" Syndrome Methemoglobinemia*).

The Nitrate Formula used by the Public Works Agency maintains the required drinking water standard for nitrates by requiring more land area for effluent disposal or by increasing the size of the parcel where the new septic system will be located, thereby diluting the nitrate load. The County Nitrate Formula is derived from the 1989 California Regional Quality Control Board study on nitrates in the Santa Ana region (California Regional Quality Control Board. *A Review of Nitrate Problems in the Groundwaters of the Santa Ana Region and their relationship to High Density Developments on Septic Tank-Subsurface Disposal Systems*).

Two geographic areas of particular importance are El Rio and the Santa Rosa Valley. The high level of nitrates measured in the Santa Rosa Valley groundwater basin has been documented in annual groundwater sampling studies conducted by the County Public Works Agency Water Resources Division. Surface and groundwater from the Tierra Rejada Valley drains to the Santa Rosa Valley groundwater basin causing impacts on that groundwater basin. The El Rio area has a high water table to begin with, poor soil conditions, and a high concentration of housing already in the area. The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board has already imposed a moratorium on development in that area unless sewer hookups can be provided.

Any development that might occur in those geographical areas could continue to exacerbate the nitrate situation of these groundwater basins. While limiting development in these areas to larger parcels would help reduce impacts of high nitrates, there will still be potentially significant impacts.

Sewage Treatment Facilities

The great majority of projected population growth and projected increases in commercial and industrial activity is expected to occur in urban areas already served by sewers. This growth will cause a significant increase in wastewater flows (see EIR Figures 4.17-2 through 4.17-15). Efficient wastewater treatment depends on adequate capacity. As the population increases, the need for more wastewater treatment capacity increases. The effects of projected growth on each treatment facility vary, depending on the age and the environment would have to be addressed in a project Environmental Document prior to the expansion of each facility.

Conditions under which treated discharge from these types of facilities may occur are regulated by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (LARWQCB) through "waste discharge requirements" developed for each facility, which are subject to independent assessments of environmental impact under CEQA. For the purposes of this EIR, it is assumed that the environmental effects of the additional discharges, which may result from the projected growth, will be addressed in the environmental documents prepared for the expansion of individual sewage plants.

Five community sewage treatment facilities are located within the unincorporated area (Camrosa, Montalvo, Ojai Valley, Piru, Saticoy), and the other nine community sewage treatment facilities are located in incorporated cities. The impacts of cumulative development on the capacity of these plants is discussed below:

Camrosa Wastewater Treatment Facility

The Camrosa Treatment Plant has limited capacity. The Camrosa Water District relies on the Camarillo Sanitary District Water Reclamation Plant for much of its disposal needs. There is not sufficient capacity at the Camrosa Water Reclamation Facility to the year 2020, which would require either expansion or increased reliance on the Camarillo Sanitary District Water Reclamation Plant. (See EIR Figure 4.17-3). Therefore, there is a potential significant impact from future population and industrial growth within the Camrosa District's service area.

Montalvo Municipal Improvement District Treatment Facility

The Montalvo Treatment Facility has a capacity of 0.36 million gallons per day. As can be seen on Figure 4.17-5, there is sufficient capacity to accommodate the projected population and industrial growth through the year 2020. Therefore, there would be no significant impact.

Ojai Valley Sanitary District Wastewater Treatment Plant

The Ojai Valley Treatment Plant has sufficient capacity through the year 2020 (see Figure 4.17-7).

Piru Wastewater Treatment Plant (Waterworks District No. 16)

Based on the proposed population and employment forecasts, the Piru Treatment Plant has sufficient capacity to the year 2020. (See EIR Figure 4.17-9). However, it should be noted that the Board of Supervisors has directed that the Piru Area Plan be updated in conjunction with three privately initiated General Plan amendment requests. The potential impacts of that update will be addressed in a separate EIR.

Saticoy Sanitary District Wastewater Treatment Plant

The Saticoy Treatment Plant is in the process of being upgraded to improve the quality of the plant's wastewater discharge. The current capacity will be maintained and there is sufficient capacity to serve future growth in the Saticoy area (see Figure 4.17-11).

Several municipal sewage treatment plants within cities, including the Camarillo Sanitary District Water Reclamation Plant, Fillmore Wastewater Treatment Plant, Moorpark Wastewater Treatment Plant, Oxnard Wastewater Treatment Plant, Santa Paula Wastewater Treatment Plant, Simi Valley County Sanitation District Water Quality Control Plant, and the Ventura Water ~~Renovation~~ Reclamation Facility, will require expansion sometime during the planning period (Figures 4.17-2, 4.17-4, 4.17-6, 4.17-8, 4.17-10, 4.17-12, and 4.17-15 respectively). In addition, the Tapia Wastewater Treatment Plant Figure 4.17-14) is located in Los Angeles County and serves portions of Ventura County.

Tapia Wastewater Treatment Plant

Wastewater from the Triunfo County Sanitation District is treated at the Tapia Treatment Plant in Los Angeles County. The Tapia Wastewater Treatment Plant is jointly owned by the Triunfo Sanitation District and the Las Virgenes Metropolitan Water District. Triunfo serves the Oak Park, North Ranch, Bell Canyon and Westlake communities.

All sewage treatment facilities must meet State and Federal water quality discharge requirements. As a result, no significant direct adverse environmental impacts on water resources are expected from these waste treatment facilities, however, in some areas of the County there is an increase of vegetation growth in the creeks and rivers, resulting from treated wastewater flow and pumped excess groundwater, which is dumped into the creek and river bottoms. This wastewater causes "greening" of the river bottoms, increasing plant and tree growth thereby creating a riparian habitat. This serves as silt trap reducing flood flow capacity and making it more difficult to maintain the channels, which tend to remain wet throughout most of the year. The increased vegetation may eventually tear lose in flood flow conditions carrying the vegetation downstream which creates damage to flood control channels. Nonetheless, VCWPD officials state there have been no major impacts resulting from increased vegetation growth in either the Ventura River or Santa Clara River.

Areas of the County where the increased vegetation growth creates a flood problem are concentrated in the eastern part of the County, downstream from the City of Thousand Oaks Hill Canyon Wastewater Treatment Plant, Simi Valley County Sanitary District Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Camarillo Sanitary District Water Reclamation Plant, all of which ultimately affect the Calleguas Creek watershed. Groundwater pumped from the ground by the City of Simi Valley, as well as effluent from the plant, is discharged into the Arroyo Simi in the western part of Simi Valley.

Offsite Waste Treatment Facilities

Each of the offsite waste treatment facilities located within the County may be affected by the amount of oil exploration and production activities. Increasing oil exploration and production usually means an increase in produced waters (brines) and solid oil field waste, which will need to be handled by existing facilities. However, the oil industry is not expected to expand in Ventura County. Therefore, no significant impact is anticipated.

Solid Waste Processing and Disposal Facilities

Countywide growth during the planning period will cause increased generation of in municipal solid waste generation in the County. According to waste generation projections prepared in the past by the Ventura County Environmental and Energy Resources Department (EERD) [formerly known as the Solid Waste Management Department], each person in Ventura County generates approximately 8.5 pounds per day or 1.55 tons per year of municipal solid waste.

Using actual disposal data reported for calendar year 2002 the amount of municipal solid waste (including recyclable streams) generated from only the unincorporated areas (UA) of Ventura County amounted to 237,598 tons, or 2.50 tons for each of the 95,200 people estimated living in the UA by the Department of Finance as of January 1, 2003. Using the State approved Adjustment Method, the EERD estimated that 136,978 tons, or 1.44 tons per person per year represented material streams that were either diverted from disposal and either reused or recycled for beneficial uses. This number reflects an AB 939 58% diversion attainment figure for the UA for 2002.

Countywide, comparable numbers for all eleven jurisdictions (i.e. ten cities plus the UA) amounted to 2,184,329 tons of solid waste generated, or 2.76 tons per year for each of the 791,600 people estimated living in Ventura County by the Department of Finance as of January 1, 2003. Using the State approved Adjustment Method, it is estimated that approximately 1,270,477 tons, or 1.60 tons per person per year was recycled for beneficial uses. Countywide, this reflects a 58% diversion attainment figure for the region. However, pursuant to applicable provisions of AB 939, actual diversion attainment numbers are measured for each of the eleven jurisdictions individually, and will vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

Assuming that the countywide population in the year 2020 reaches 893,770 people, the EERD projects that the amount of solid waste generated from all of Ventura County's eleven jurisdictions during that year would be approximately 2,466,805 tons, based on the year 2002 per capita generation rate of 2.76 tons per person per year.

On November 26, 2002, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors approved both an extension to a Conditional Use Permit (CUP), and Operating Agreement, with Waste Management, Inc., operator of the Simi Valley Landfill. The result of these Board actions allowed the operator to continue solid waste disposal operations at their landfill site (with a maximum cap of 3,000 tons per day of municipal solid waste), expand recyclable operations at their site (up to 6,000 tons per day) and which increased the projected site life of the Simi Valley Landfill an additional 25 years. The Toland Landfill currently has a long life expectancy of approximately 25 years at present waste generation rates.

A certain amount of waste generated in Ventura County is landfilled in Los Angeles County, and some Los Angeles County and Santa Barbara County generated waste is disposed at two landfills located within Ventura County (i.e. Simi Valley and Toland Landfills). In-county waste generation is not identical to in-county waste disposal. During calendar year 2002, approximately 250,00 tons of waste was "imported" into Ventura County landfills, and approximately 79,000 tons of waste generated in Ventura County was "exported" to out of county disposal facilities.

Not withstanding calendar year 2002 disposal data, it is difficult to predict future ratios of "imported" versus "exported" wastes, since the site choice of disposal sites for a particular project will be made by various public and private waste collectors, and is generally a function of operational imperatives and market conditions (i.e. availability and cost of disposal options).

Based on the current CSE, the County believes that there is 15 years or more of disposal capacity available for county disposal. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that any individual project in the unincorporated area would have a significant impact on the demand for solid waste disposal capacity. In addition, Section 4770, Waste Diversion Programs, of the codified Ordinances of the County of Ventura, minimizes the potential solid waste disposal capacity impacts for any commercial and/or residential project in the unincorporated area by mandating the recycling of a wide range of materials found on the "Director's List of Recyclables."

Each separate proposed solid waste processing and disposal facility project in the unincorporated area will require its own separate project EIR, which will address the potentially significant impacts on the environment at the time a new site or facility is proposed or an existing facility is proposed for expansion.

4.17.3 Mitigation Measures

The following policies and programs of the General Plan *Goals, Policies and Programs* will help mitigate impacts from sewage disposal systems, sewage treatment facilities and solid waste processing and disposal facilities:

4.4.2-1 *Community sewage treatment facilities* and *solid waste disposal sites* shall be deemed consistent with the General Plan only if they are designated on the Public Facilities Map. *On-site septic systems* (i.e., *individual sewage disposal systems*), *on-site wastewater treatment facilities*, *waste transfer stations*, *off-site waste treatment facilities* and on-site storage facilities are consistent with the General Plan if they conform to the *goals, policies* and *programs* of the General Plan.

4.4.2-2 Any subdivision, or discretionary change in land use having a direct effect upon the volume of sewage, shall be required to connect to a public sewer system. Exceptions to this policy to allow the use of septic systems may be granted in accordance with County Sewer Policy. Installation and maintenance of septic systems shall be regulated by the County Environmental Health Division in accordance with the County's Sewer Policy, County Building Code, and County Service Area 32.

4.4.2-3 In order to reduce the need for additional wastewater treatment capacity, the County shall:

- require new *discretionary development* to utilize water-conserving design features;
- encourage the retrofitting of existing uses and buildings with water-conserving devices;
- require that new wastewater lateral and trunk collection lines be designed to allow the minimum feasible amount of inflow and infiltration into the wastewater collection system.
- periodically inspect existing lateral and trunk collection lines to identify areas subject to excessive inflow and infiltration and remedy identified problems as feasible.

4.4.2-4 *Discretionary development* adjacent to existing and proposed waste treatment, transfer and disposal sites, as identified in the Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan, shall not conflict with the current and anticipated future use of these waste facilities.

4.4.2-5 Waste treatment and disposal operations shall be designed and conducted in a manner that is compatible with surrounding land uses such that the potential impacts are mitigated to less than significant levels, or, where no feasible mitigation measures are available, a statement of overriding considerations consistent with CEQA shall be adopted. At

the end of such operations, the site shall be restored to a use compatible with surrounding land uses.

4.4.2-6 Applicants for *discretionary development* shall be encouraged to employ practices that reduce the quantities of wastes generated and shall be requested to engage in recycling activities to further reduce the volume of waste disposed of in landfills.

4.17.4 Residual Impacts

Any growth or development that results in usage by human beings will result in the creation of additional waste output. Whether it is solid waste or liquid waste, these increases could potentially have significant impacts on the environment. However, state law mandates and regulates projects with regard to dealing with the waste once it is created. Minimizing increases in the waste streams can be addressed from the approval side of development by local governments by conditioning projects at time of approval and making certain that the infrastructure is in place to accommodate those increases. No matter how much growth is controlled, there will still be the potential for degradation of the environment by errors in calculation, breakdowns in the facilities, and inappropriate disposal by humans. Such accidents and incidents are often beyond the control of government, and they are difficult to quantitatively measure. Because of the rarity of such events, and the measures to deal with them through clean up and enforcement, impacts from such events, individually or cumulatively, should be less than significant.

Figure 4.17-1
Septic Systems Limitation – South Half

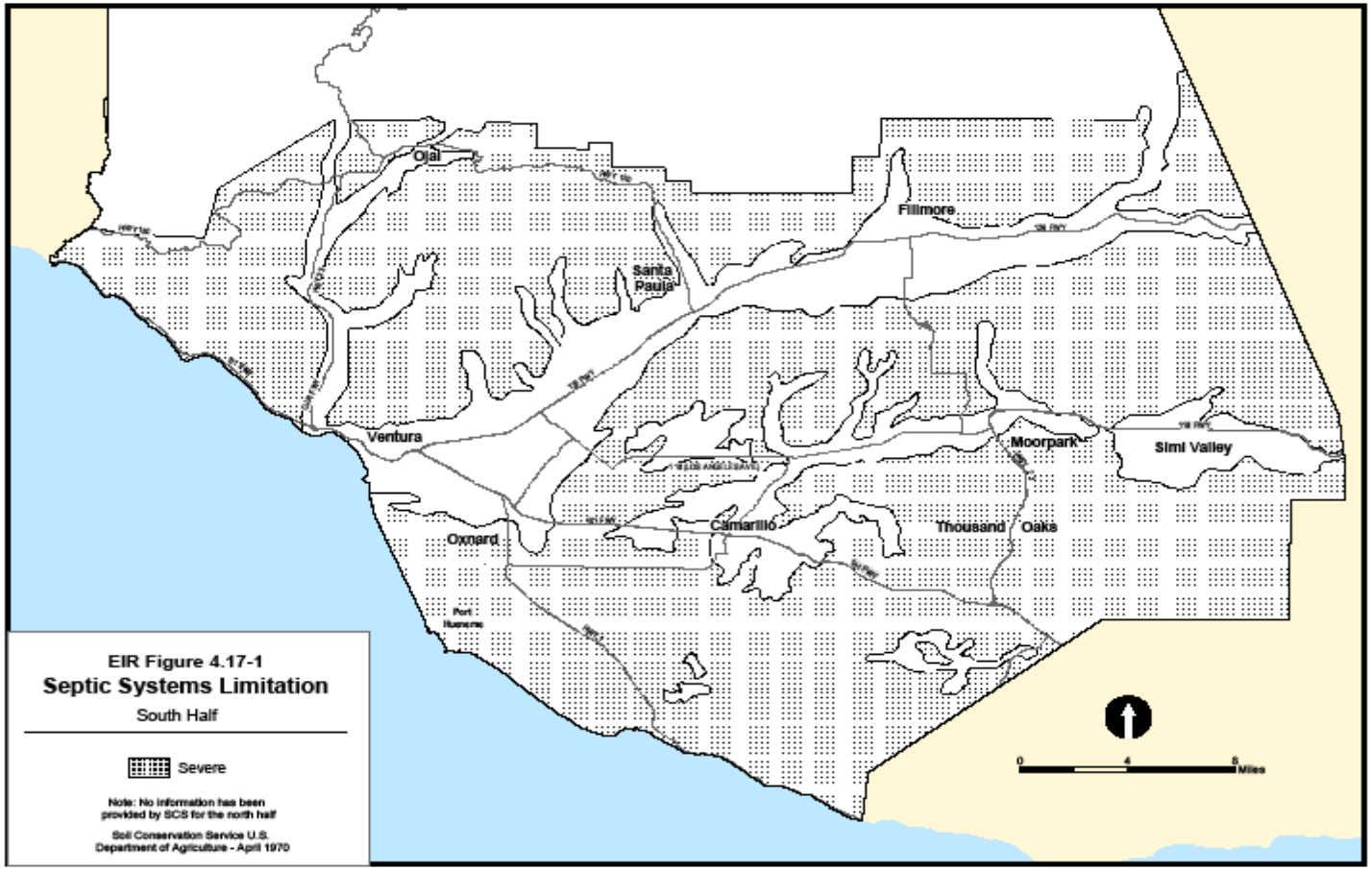


Figure 4.17-2
Sewage Treatment Plant Staging - Camarillo Sanitary District Water Reclamation Plant (Graph)

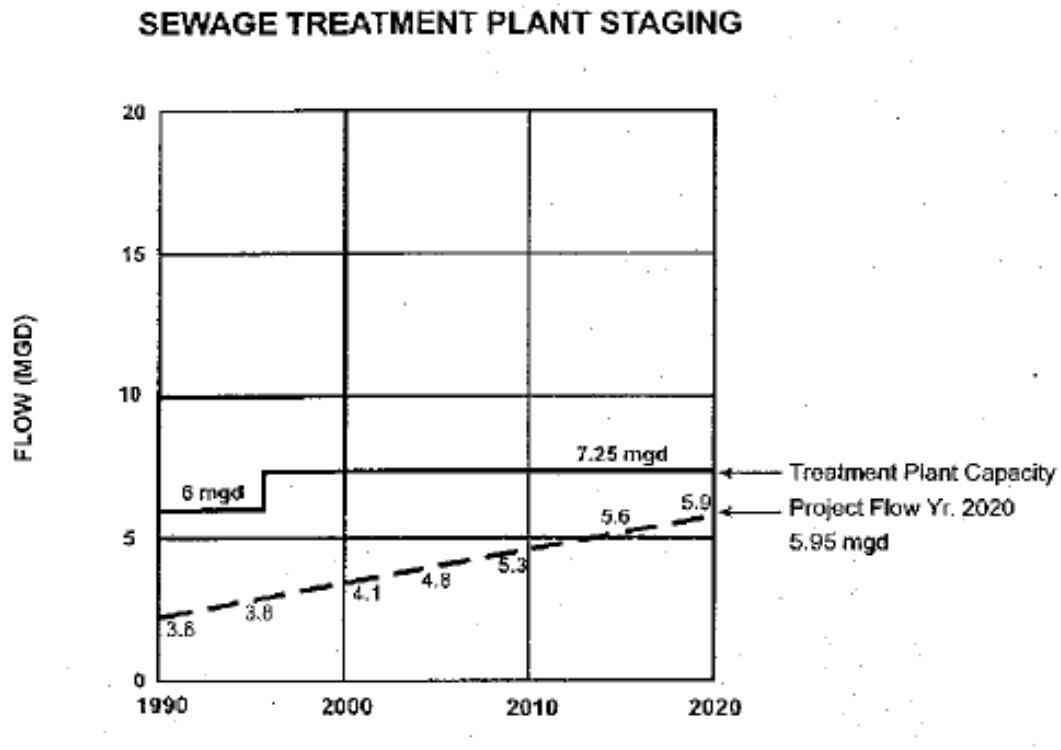


Figure 4.17- 3
Sewage Treatment Plant Staging - Camrosa Wastewater Treatment Plant (Graph)

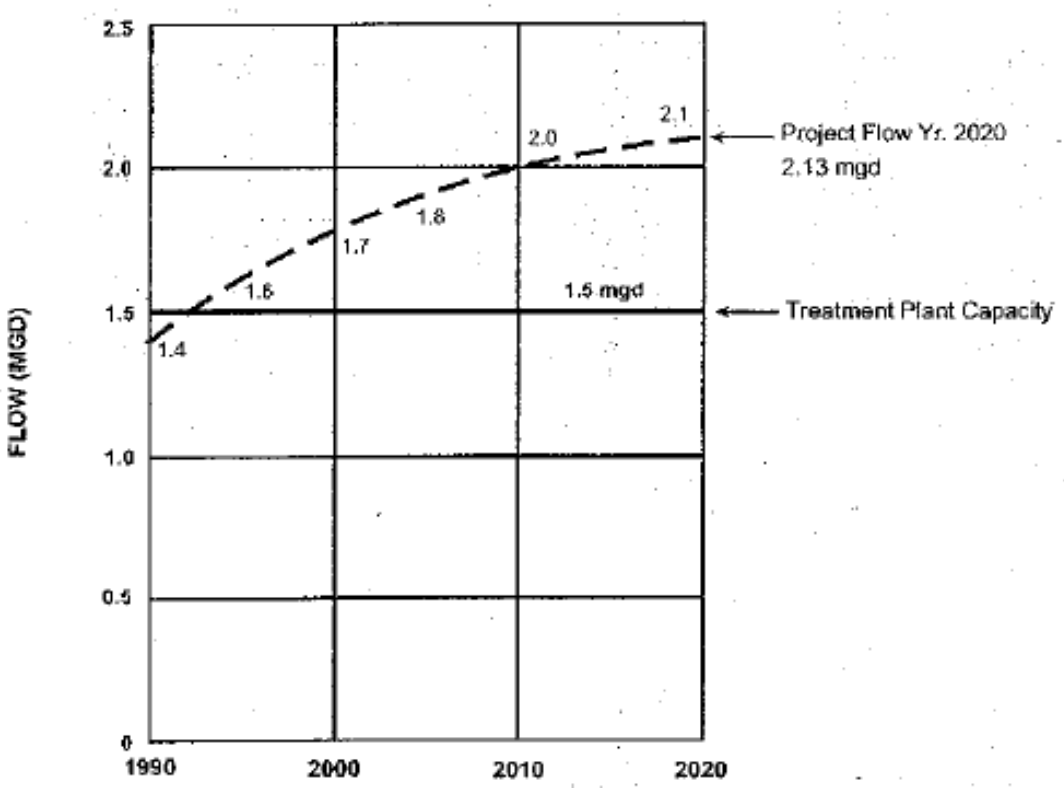


Figure 4.17- 4
Sewage Treatment Plant Staging - Fillmore Wastewater Treatment Plant
(Graph)

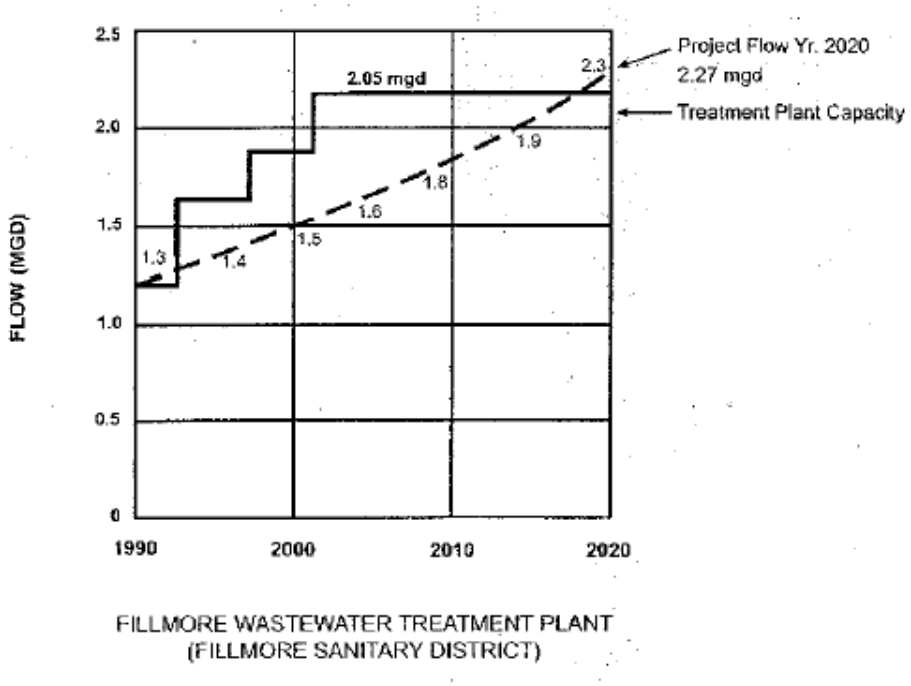


Figure 4.17- 5
Sewage Treatment Plant Staging - Montalvo Municipal Improvement District Treatment Facility (Graph)

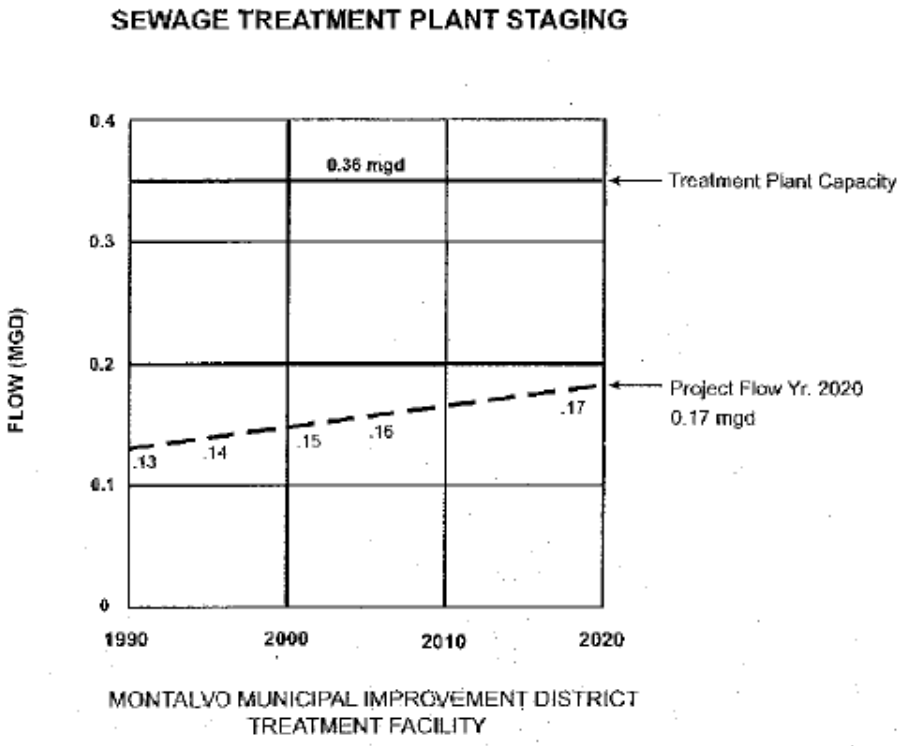


Figure 4.17- 6
Sewage Treatment Plant Staging - Moorpark Wastewater Treatment Plant (Graph)

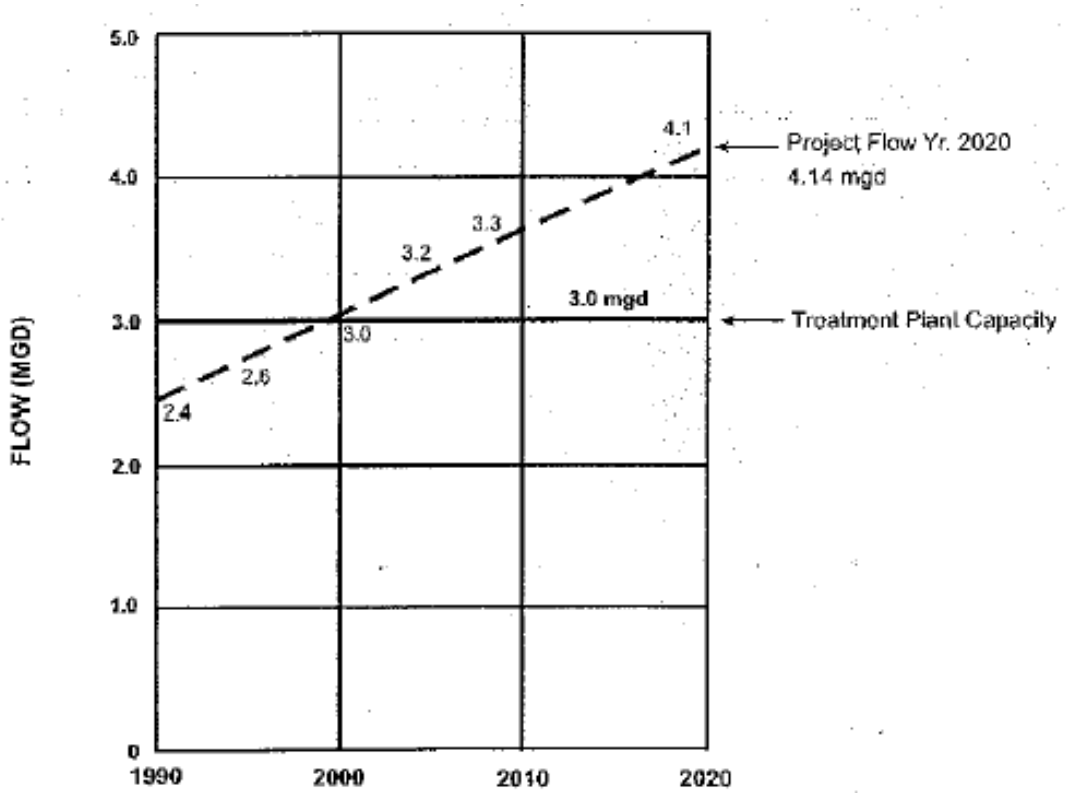


Figure 4.17-7
Sewage Treatment Plant Staging - Ojai Valley Sanitary District Wastewater Treatment Plant (Graph)

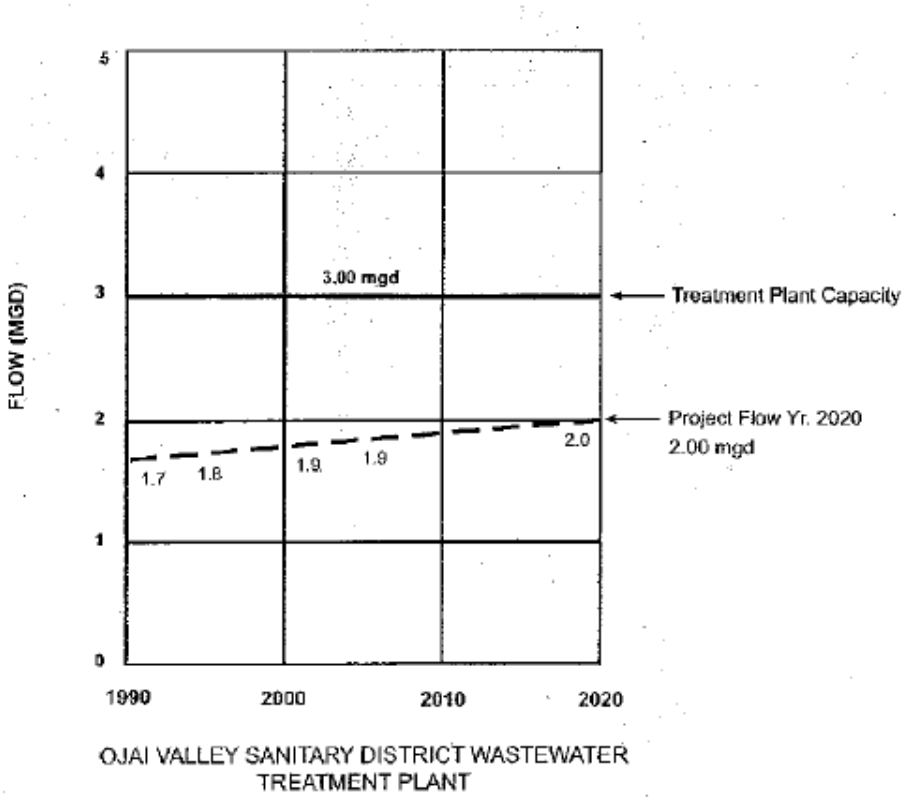


Figure 4.17- 8
Sewage Treatment Plant Staging - City of Oxnard Wastewater Treatment Facility (Graph)

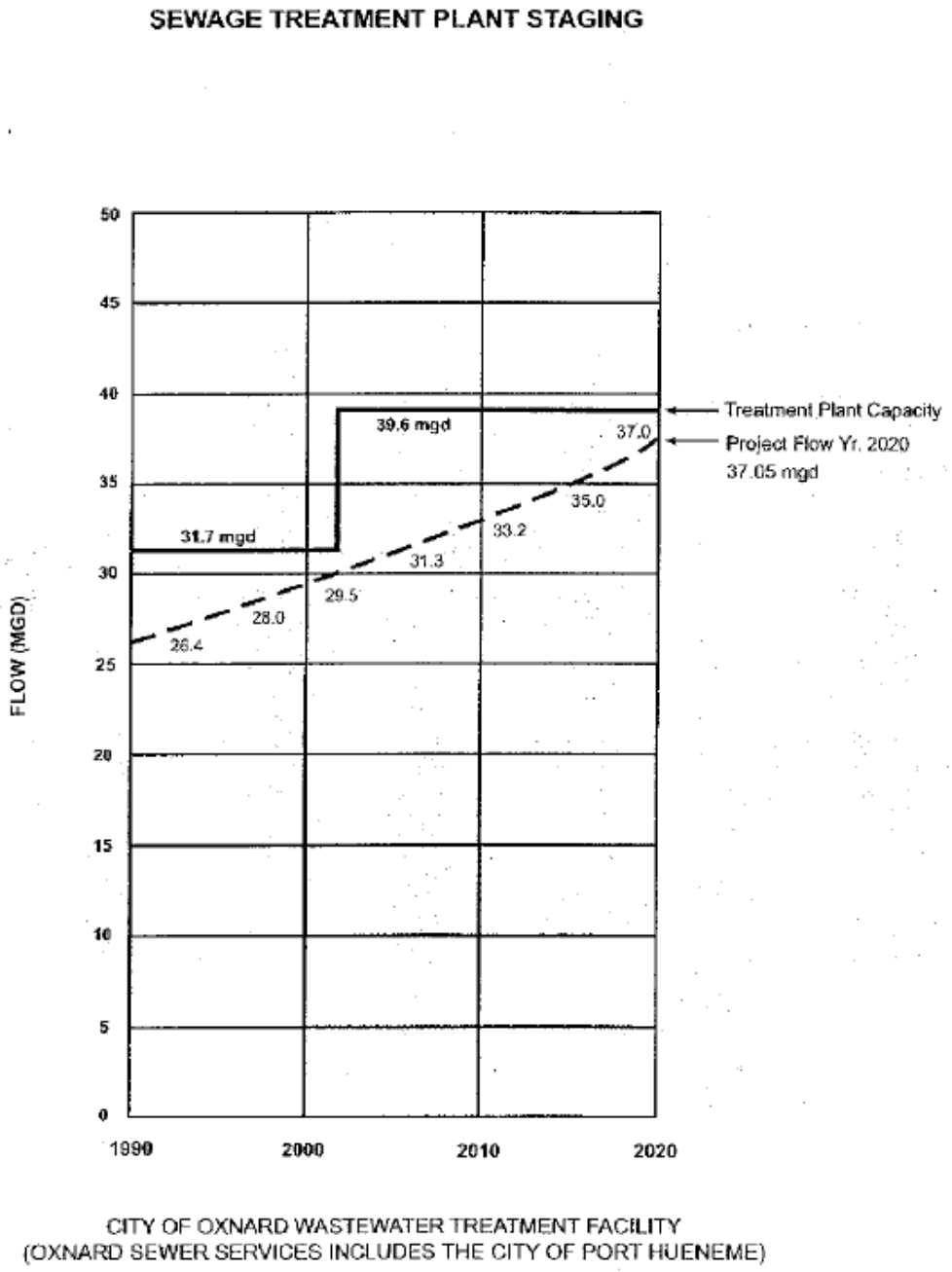


Figure 4.17- 9
Sewage Treatment Plant Staging - Piru Wastewater Treatment Plant (Graph)

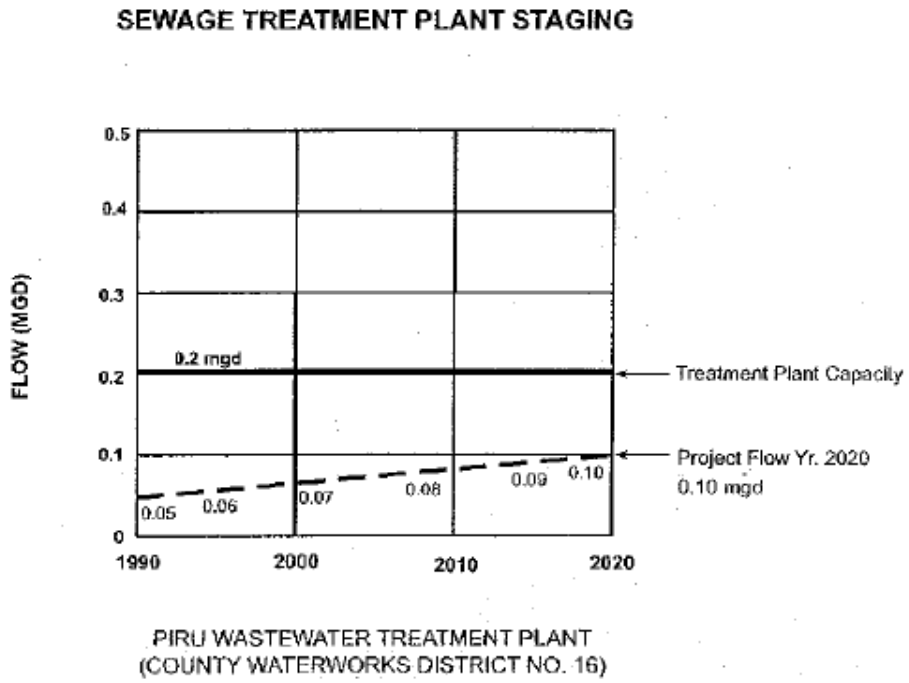


Figure 4.17-10
Sewage Treatment Plant Staging - City of Santa Paula Wastewater Treatment Plant (Graph)

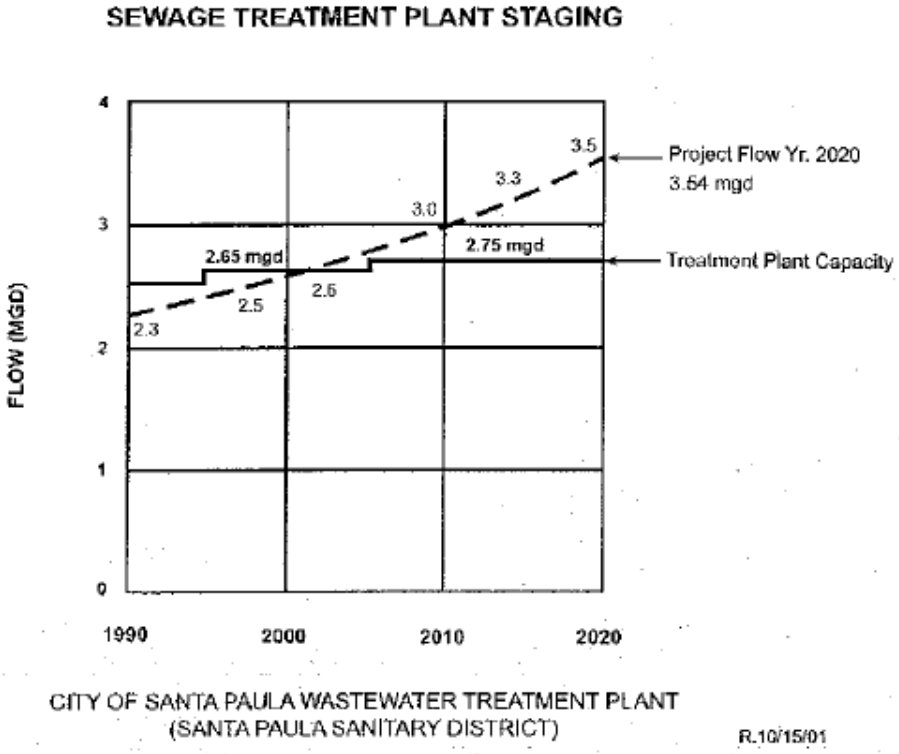


Figure 4.17-11
Sewage Treatment Plant Staging - Saticoy Sanitary District Wastewater Treatment Plant (Graph)

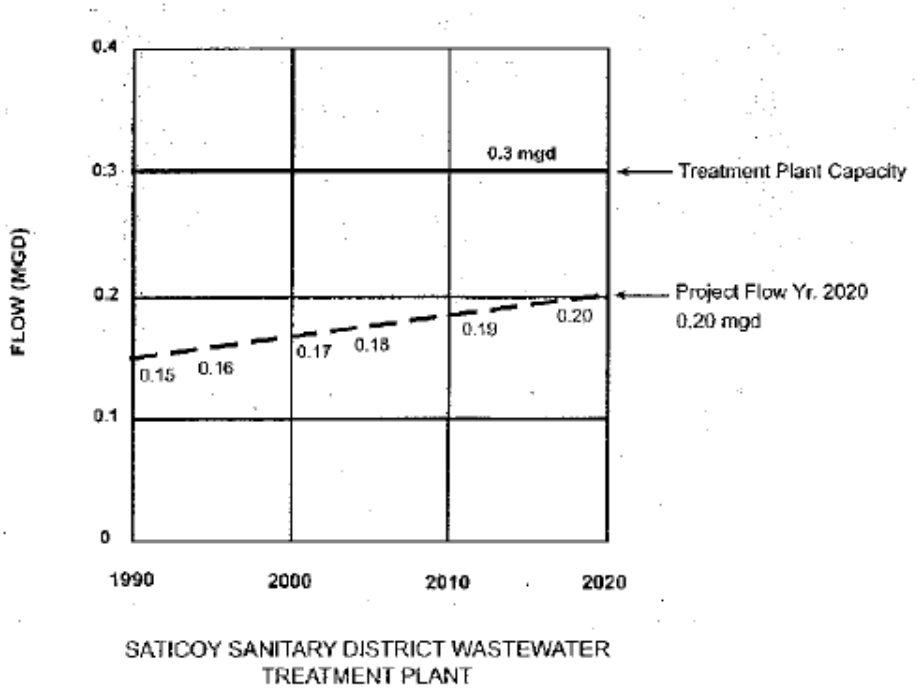


Figure 4.17-12
Sewage Treatment Plant Staging - Simi Valley County Sanitation District Water Quality Control Plant (Graph)

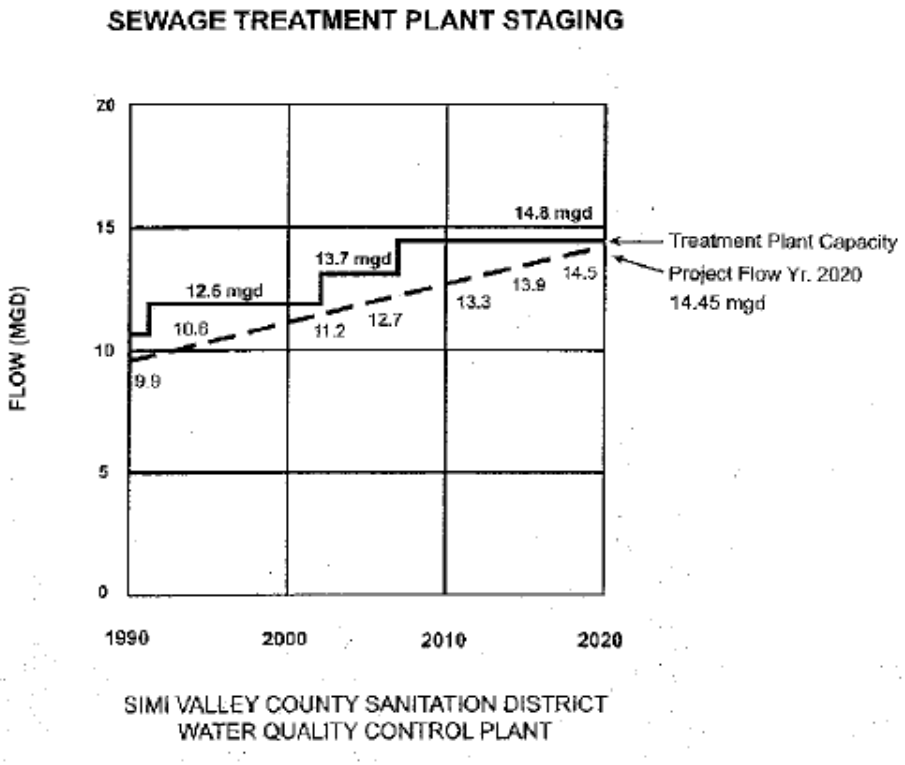


Figure 4.17-13
Sewage Treatment Plant Staging - City of Thousand Oaks Hill Canyon Wastewater Treatment Plant (Graph)

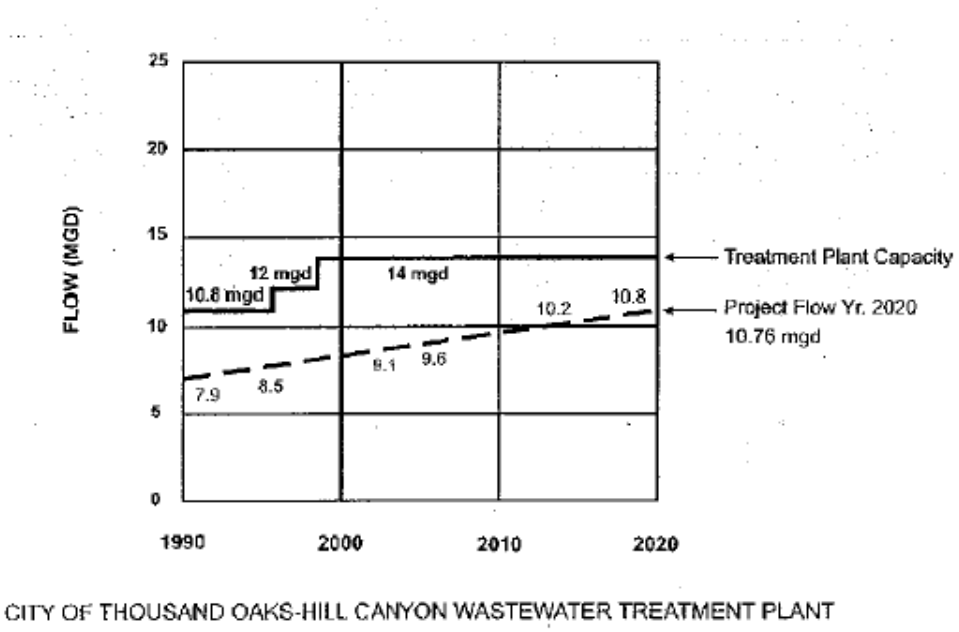
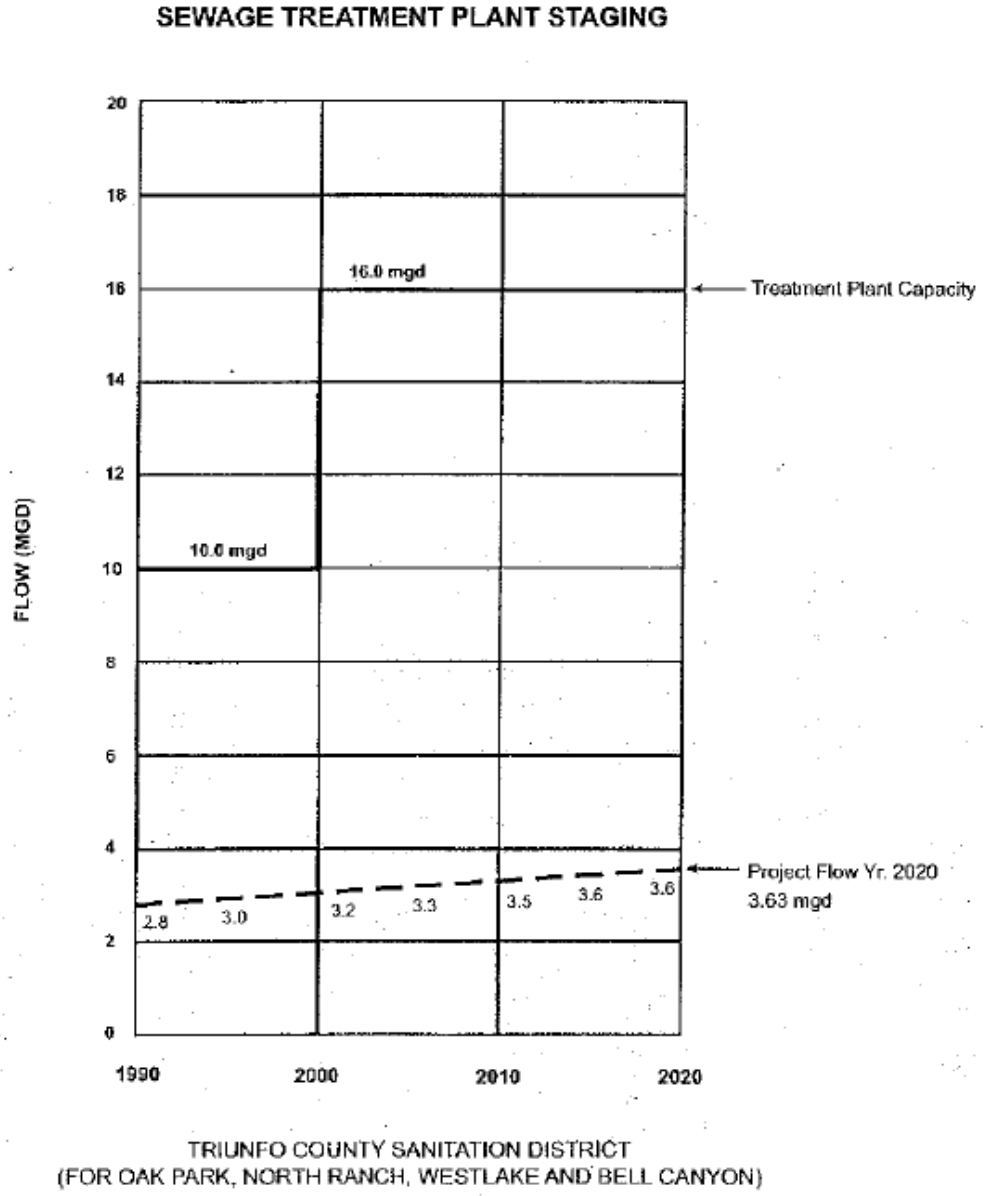
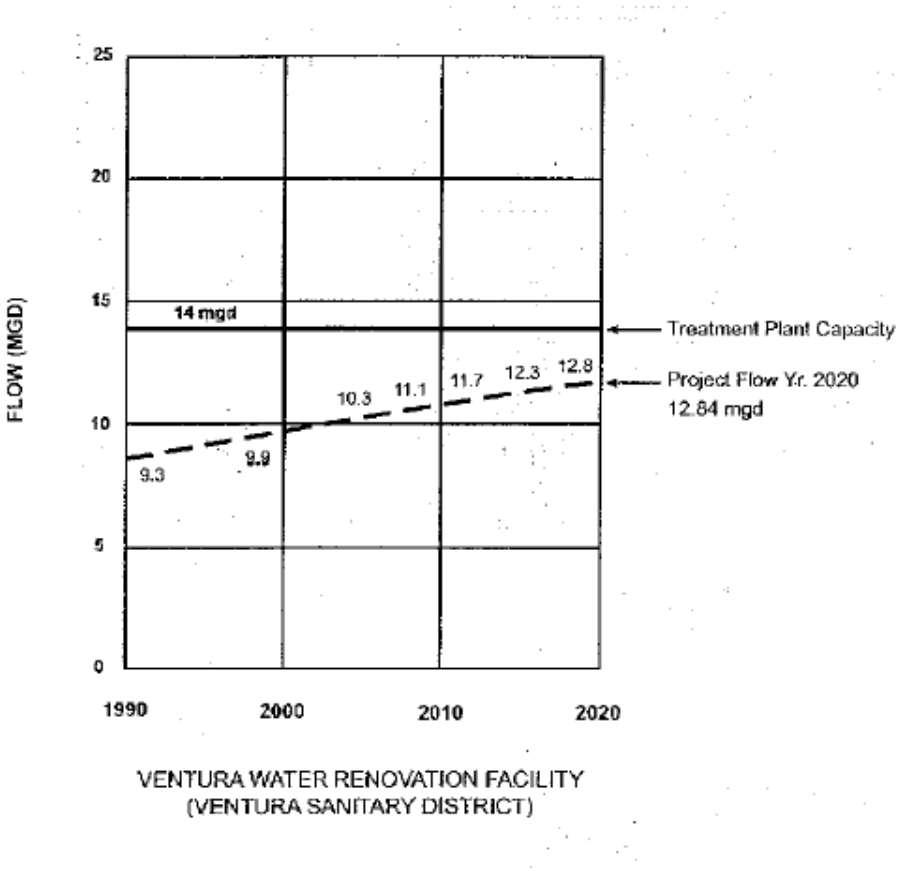


Figure 4.17-14
Sewage Treatment Plant Staging - Triunfo County Sanitation District (Graph)



NOTE: Projected flow shown is for the wastewater from the Triunfo County Sanitation District, which includes Oak Park, North Ranch, Westlake, and Bell Canyon. Total treatment plant capacity is shown for the Tapia Wastewater Treatment Plant located at Calabasas in Los Angeles County. The Tapia Wastewater Treatment Plan also treats wastewater from the Las Virgenes Sanitation District located in Los Angeles County. Wastewater from Oak Park, North Ranch and Westlake is treated at the Tapia Wastewater Treatment Plan while the City of Los Angeles treats the wastewater from Bell Canyon.

Figure 4.17-15
Sewage Treatment Plant Staging - Ventura Water ~~Renovation~~ Reclamation Facility (Graph)



4.18 Utilities/Energy Resources

The public utilities discussed below represent a vital part of the urban infrastructure necessary for properly planned land use. These utilities include electrical, gas and communication facilities:

Electric - Electrical facilities include generation plants, transmission substations, and transmission lines.

Gas - The fixed transmission and distribution system for natural gas that supplies Ventura County.

Communication - Such uses and structures as radio and television transmitting and receiving antennas, radar stations, microwave towers and telephone facilities.

These utilities are regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission.

A project's impacts on or demand for utilities, and whether or not these impacts would be significant, is determined by the utility company.

4.18.1 Environmental Setting

A detailed description of existing public utilities is available in Section 4.5 of the *Public Facilities and Services Appendix* of the County General Plan. A summary of the environmental setting for public utilities is as follows:

Electrical Facilities

Ventura County is served by the Southern California Edison Company, which owns and operates substations and transmission lines, and purchases electricity from a variety of different generating sources (e.g., oil and gas fired, solar, hydro-electric, geo-thermal and nuclear generators).

The major users of electrical energy based on each of the major sectors as noted in the 1991 Annual Report from Southern California Edison Company is as follows:

Residential	33%
Commercial	36%
Industrial	16%
Public Authority (Street Lighting)	9%
Resale	1%
Agriculture	2%
Other	3%
Total	100%

The Southern California Edison Company estimates monthly consumption of 520 kwh per dwelling unit.

According to Southern California Edison Company, no single geographic area is planned autonomously, but rather as part of the total system. This approach results in a more reliable, economical, and operationally flexible electrical system, which enables the customers to receive high quality service at a reasonable rate.

Electrical facilities include generation plants, transmission substations and transmission lines which are discussed below.

Generation Plants

Reliant Energy presently operates two major sources of generation in Ventura County (Mandalay and Ormond Beach), both of which are located along the Coastal Area of the City of Oxnard. The Mandalay facility is located in "west" Oxnard while the Ormond Beach facility is located in "south" Oxnard.

Both of these facilities are conventional gas fuel types and are located within the coastal zone on the Oxnard Plain. The total generating capacity of these two power plants is 1,930 megawatts (MW). (As of 2004, Reliant Energy had “mothballed” 190 MW of capacity and had no plans to bring that capacity back on line.) These facilities generate power which is then fed onto the electrical grid and distributed throughout California and the west. The amount of electricity produced by the two existing generating facilities in Ventura County is more than the total electrical requirements of the County.

Transmission Substations

There are two 220-66 kV source substations within Ventura County: Moorpark at 5027 Gabbert and the Santa Clara substation located in Ventura at 10351 East Foothill Road. These stations provide 66 kV electric power to the majority of the distribution substations in the County for serving the local loads of the area. Saugus 220-66 kV substation, which is located in Los Angeles County, also serves several 66 kV stations that are within Ventura County.

The 66-16 kV substations provide a source for distribution lines and the smaller 16-4 kV substations.

Transmission Lines

The electric power is distributed to individual customers from the substations through distribution lines operating at 16 kV or 4 kV. These lines are normally extended underground from the substations and integrated with the existing distribution network of the area.

Natural Gas Facilities

Southern California Gas Company supplies natural gas to all of Ventura County through a fixed pipeline transmission and distribution system. There are approximately 1,125 miles of supply lines and distribution mains in the County. The number of connected meters in Ventura County is about 201,000.

The breakdown of gas usage by percentage for major sectors for Ventura County during 1991 is as follows:

Residential	20%
Commercial (including agriculture)	11%
Industrial	22%
Electrical Generation	47%
Total	100%

For 1992 (the last current data), the Southern California Gas Company estimated that the average consumption per household per month was 53 therms.

Communication Facilities

Telephone Service

Telephone service is provided by SBC California and ~~General Telephone Company of California (GTE), Inc.~~ Verizon Communications. Communities served by SBC include Fillmore, Moorpark, Ojai, Simi Valley, and Ventura; plus the unincorporated areas of Oak View, Piru and Saticoy.

~~GTE's Western Regional Headquarters is located in Thousand Oaks, serving a twenty county area with more than 330 communities. GTE~~ Verizon Communications is the result of a merger of GTE and Atlantic Bell telephone companies in 2000. They retained the GTE Western Regional Headquarters, which is located in Thousand Oaks. Verizon provides phone service to the cities of Camarillo, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Santa Paula and Thousand Oaks; plus the unincorporated areas of Newbury Park, Somis and Westlake.

Cable Television Service

The television broadcast industry is in a state of flux in the early 21st Century. Satellite dish systems, with reduced dish sizes and hundreds of channels for viewing, are challenging cable television systems. Yet cable companies are expanding their cable systems to meet more communication flexibility, including computer services and "on demand" television technology.

By 2003, Adelphia Communications had taken over operations of all cable systems throughout Ventura County with the exception of the west side of the City of Ventura. That cable provider was the locally owned and operated Avenue Cable Company. By the end of 2003, both Adelphia and Avenue Cable companies had filed for bankruptcy. In mid-2004, it is unclear as to who the final owners and operators of local cable television will be, but Adelphia will continue to own and operate the majority of cable systems in the cities and unincorporated portions of the County for the short run.

Governmental Communications Equipment

County communications equipment, operated by the County's Information Systems Department, includes radio, microwave, and telephone switching equipment, which is located at 17 separate sites, including each of the three community colleges. In addition, there are other governmental and privately operated communications equipment facilities (including radio and television transmitting and receiving antennas, radar stations and microwave towers) scattered throughout the County's hilltops. These facilities are located on the following peaks: Hall Mountain (north of Ventura), Rasnow Peak (south of Newbury Park), Red Mountain (south of Lake Casitas), South Mountain (southeast of Santa Paula), Sulphur Mountain (south of Ojai), Santa Susana Peak (Rocketdyne), and other peaks in the Santa Monica Mountains. The U.S. Navy maintains communications equipment on Mugu Peak.

4.18.2 Impacts

Future development will impact existing and future electrical power, natural gas supplies, telephone service, cable television service, and communication facilities.

Electrical Facilities

Long-range availability of electric energy is dependent upon the generation capability of many sources in the western United States and Canada.

According to Southern California Edison officials, electrical service will continue to be provided during the planning period. Continued conservation practices and technological advances may actually result in incremental decreases in electrical power demand per household.

During the coming years, it will be necessary to construct additional distribution lines from the different substations to meet the load requirements of the area. In addition, there will be a need to increase the length of many of the existing distribution lines to serve the remaining loads. As such, the primary impact within the County is the visual impacts associated with construction of aboveground electrical

power transmission lines of 66kV or greater and its impact on adjacent land uses that may be incompatible with utility facilities. It should be noted that the location of major transmission lines are regulated by the State Public Utilities Commission, which holds public hearings on and determines the final location of major transmission line facilities.

Natural Gas Facilities

Long-range availability of natural gas is dependent on regulatory policies and worldwide and domestic natural gas supplies. According to Southern California Gas Company officials, adequate supplies and facilities are in place to serve Ventura County during the planning period and therefore no mitigation measures are necessary.

Continued conservation practices and technological advances actually may result in incremental decreases in natural gas consumption per household.

Southern California Gas company inspects and maintains their high-pressure natural gas lines on a regular basis and they are prepared to replace sections of line in case of an emergency.

Communication Facilities

Telephone Service

Additional telephone connections will be necessary during the planning period. According to officials from both ~~General~~ Verizon Telephone Company and SBC, adequate telephone services can be expanded, resulting in no significant impact. Some new aboveground telephone lines in rural, agriculture and open space areas may create negative visual impacts.

Cable Television Service

Cable television is provided on a demand basis resulting in no significant impact; therefore requiring no mitigation measures. Cable television utilizes the same underground utility trenches or aboveground power poles as Southern California Edison Company and/or the telephone companies with only visual impacts resulting from aboveground lines.

Governmental Communication Equipment

Individual communication facilities (i.e. radio and television transmitting and receiving antennas, radar stations, and microwave towers) are reviewed on a case-to-case basis on whether such a facility could interfere with the transmission receiving capability of any other existing facility. According to the Communication Manager of Ventura County General Services Agency, existing communication facilities can provide radio and television service to the entire county and its future growth.

The construction of communication facilities (radio and television transmitting and receiving antennas, radar stations, and microwave towers) could have a significant visual impact.

4.18.3 Mitigation Measures

The following policies from the General Plan *Goals, Policies and Programs* will help mitigate visual impacts from overhead electrical transmission and telephone lines:

4.5.2-1 New gas, electric, cable television, and telephone utility transmission lines shall use or parallel existing utility rights-of-way where feasible and avoid scenic areas, when not in conflict with the rules and regulations of the California Public Utilities Commission. When such areas cannot be avoided, transmission lines should be designed and located in a manner to minimize their visual impact.

4.5.2-2 All transmission lines should be located and constructed in a manner which minimizes disruption of natural vegetation and agricultural activities and avoids unnecessary grading of slopes, when not in conflict with the rules and regulations of the California Public Utilities Commission.

4.5.2-3 Discretionary development shall be conditioned to place utility service lines underground wherever feasible.

1.7.2-4 Proposed undergrounding of overhead utilities within Scenic Resource Areas or Scenic Highway Areas shall be given first priority by the Public Works Agency in utilizing the County's allocation of Utility Undergrounding Funds.

Private communication facilities are required to file a Conditional Use Permit and will, therefore, be reviewed for their impacts and, it necessary, mitigation measures.

4.18.4 Residual Impact

Although the Public Utilities Commission or Ventura County will evaluate future utility facilities for their visual impact, the Public Utilities Commission could still approve such facilities, even if the impacts are significant and immitigable, if there are overriding considerations. Therefore, adverse visual impacts may occur.

4.19 Law Enforcement and Emergency Services

Law Enforcement personnel consists of those sworn Deputy Sheriffs and all sworn and non-sworn support personnel used to protect the citizens of Ventura County, as they relate to the Sheriff's jurisdiction. Equipment consists of those items used by Sheriff's personnel in the performance of their duties.

A law enforcement facility is defined as a building used to house the personnel and equipment of the Sheriff for the purpose of performing their duties of protecting the citizens of the county.

To establish precise guidelines to be used for the recommendation of additional personnel and related equipment, both in sworn and non-sworn clerical support, when the cumulative impact of any project(s) begins to overextend the existing resources, is not possible.

As a general rule, officer-to-population ratios can be used, however calls for service, area to be served, and response times must also be considered. The last three factors vary from area to area so dramatically that they must be viewed subjectively.

The Sheriff's Department is currently working with an average officer-to-population ratio of 1 to 1270 in all of the existing unincorporated service areas. From a standpoint of officer-to-population ratio, this would be the minimally acceptable level. However, the subjective variables of calls for service, area to be served, and response times must be considered.

Currently, all patrol facilities are, on an average, approximately 19.5 miles apart. The Sheriff's Department's would like to maintain that average as to the needs for additional facilities in areas where subdivisions with a projected population of 635 or more and the cumulative impact of that subdivision overextends the nearest existing facility. However, the subjective variables must be considered in that evaluation.

As a general rule the distance between patrol area stations can be used to determine the need for additional stations in large development areas. The need to increase the size of an existing station will depend on personnel size at that station, which is affected by the subjective variables of calls for service, response time, and area to be served.

Generally, as the projected population ratio exceeds the average, additional sworn and support personnel, and equipment will be needed as it relates to the increase in population. A base of a 635 population increase or one-half an officer will be used to determine the need for an EIR.

No threshold criteria are available for calls for service, area to be served, and response times due to the aforementioned subjectiveness.

4.19.1 Environmental Setting

A detailed discussion of the Environmental Setting for law enforcement and emergency services is described in Section 4.7 of the *Public Facilities and Services Appendix* of the County *General Plan* and Section 2.17 of the *Hazards Appendix*. A summary of the environmental setting for law enforcement and emergency services is as follows:

Current Law Enforcement Setting

The Sheriff is the Chief Law Enforcement Officer for the County of Ventura and, as such, has jurisdiction over its unincorporated areas. In 1965, the Sheriff, through a contract, began to provide law enforcement services for the Cities of Thousand Oaks and Camarillo. In 1980, the City of Ojai also contracted for law enforcement services. The City of Moorpark became the fourth municipality to contract in July 1984. More recently, the City of Fillmore contracted for police services in June 1987.

The Sheriff is also the keeper of the County jails used for the detention of persons committed for contempt, or upon civil process, and for the detention of pre-sentenced and sentenced persons to imprisonment therein on conviction for a crime. The Sheriff must receive all persons committed to jail by a competent authority. The Sheriff is required to transport and deliver prisoners committed to state

prisons to the place of their confinement. He is responsible for the maintenance of the well being of all prisoners within the county jail system.

The Sheriff is an officer of the Superior and Municipal Courts and as such, provides courtroom security with the placement of deputy sheriffs as bailiffs. In conjunction with his/her responsibilities as an officer of the court, the Sheriff provides for the service of both criminal and civil process throughout the county.

To accommodate the responsibilities of the Office of the Sheriff, the department is comprised of eight major divisions: Support Services, West County Patrol, East Valley Patrol, Central County Patrol, Special Services, Custody, Project Development and Court Services.

The Sheriff's Department is headquartered at 800 South Victoria Avenue, Ventura and maintains stations in Camarillo, Fillmore, Lockwood Valley, Moorpark, Ojai, and Thousand Oaks. A new East Valley Law Enforcement Facility located between Thousand Oaks and Simi Valley opened in 1989. As of the summer of 1996, the Sheriff's Department was staffed by 1,126 personnel; including 711 sworn officers.

Custody and Detention Facilities

The Custody Division is the largest division within the Sheriff's Department both in terms of budget and personnel. It has the responsibility for providing a safe, as well as secure environment for an average daily count of approximately 1,267 inmates. These inmates are housed at two major facilities. The largest inmate population is housed at the Main Jail/Pre-Trial Detention Facility located at the Ventura County Government Center, 800 South Victoria Avenue, Ventura. The remaining inmates are housed at the Todd Road Jail located south of Highway 126 between Ventura and Santa Paula Ventura. (Refer to Figure 4.19-1 for location of these detention facilities). The East Valley Substation at 2201 E. Olsen Road in Simi Valley has a temporary jail holding facility.

The Main Jail/Pre-Trial Detention Facility was built in 1978 for a capacity of 438 inmates. In recent years, the capacity was doubled when single-person cells were remodeled to include a second bed. In 1987, the average daily population at this facility was approximately 884.

The Main Jail/Pre-Trial Detention Facility has a total floor area of over 220,000 square feet and a rated bed space capacity of 884. This facility has the capability of providing a broad range of inmate programs and services and still maintaining an acceptable level of security for both inmates and staff personnel. The two housing floors, third and fourth levels, are each divided into four quadrants. These quadrants are subdivided into four housing sections, each of which has the capacity to house 48 inmates. A medical housing section located on the second level has 18 cells. Medical, dental, and psychiatric services are provided by private medical contract personnel. Recreational facilities are located within the quadrants as well as on the roof and include weight machines, basketball, volleyball and handball.

The building is designed with the idea of bringing services to the inmates instead of moving inmates. As a result, a relatively small staff is able to provide all mandated services. The jail kitchen, located on the second level, prepares meals for all in-house inmates as well as sending out meals to the County's Work Furlough Program and Juvenile Facilities.

The Todd Road facility has the capacity to house 2,307 inmates. The jail consists of modular buildings and accessory structures, an onsite sewage treatment plant and water storage system. Facilities also include an inmate laundry facility, kitchen, inmate vocational/educational facility, administrative offices and inmate vocational/training programs. Also, in 1988 the U.S. Forest Service Camp in Rose Valley was refurbished to house approximately 160 inmates.

Court Facilities and Services

Both the Municipal Court and Superior Court are located in the Hall of Justice, located at the Ventura County Government Center complex at 800 South Victoria Avenue, Ventura. Simi Valley also has a Municipal Court Branch located at 3855-F Alamo Street, Simi Valley (owned).

Emergency Services

According to County Ordinance 2538, the Sheriff is the Director of Emergency Services and during incidents of natural disaster, becomes the coordinator of County and State requested resources. Emergency Services planning in Ventura County is conducted in the Sheriff's Department, Support Services Division, Office of Emergency Services. The staff coordinates planning at each government level. The Director is further responsible for reporting fiscal and management data to the State Office of Emergency Services and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Local government is recognized as the first line of official public responsibility for emergency management activity. In a disaster, State and Federal Governments can be counted on for major support only when damage has been usually widespread and severe. The role of local emergency management agency, as the focus of the planning effort, is to develop and maintain an ongoing program of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. It is not a separate unit or action group set apart from the normal functions of government, standing by to "save the day," in the event of an emergency. The Emergency Management Agency serves the Board of Supervisors and Chief Administrative Office by working with the departments of local government and private sector organizations in the development of plans and capabilities responsive to those hazards which seriously threaten the jurisdiction. Prior to a crisis, hazard mitigation programs can reduce the vulnerability of people and property. In a crisis, effective response is often a result of what has been accomplished prior to the emergency.

The eight major elements of the Office of Emergency Services work program include:

- 1. Emergency Organization Planning and Management.
- 2. Direction, Control and Warning.
- 3. Population Protection.
- 4. Radioactive Contamination, Monitoring and Control.
- 5. Disaster Related Public Education and Emergency Public Information.
- 6. Emergency Support Services.
- 7. Hazard Analysis and Mitigation.
- 8. Multi-Hazards Functional Planning Guidance.

Programs in the department include Public Education presentations on the following hazards:

- Earthquakes
- Floods
- Tsunami/Seiche
- Wildland Fire
- Hazardous Materials
- Landslides
- Dam Failure Emergency
- Nuclear Defense/Radiological
- Transportation Accidents (involving airplanes, boats, major highway accidents, and railroads)

Emergency Response Plans are kept on all of the above natural and man-made disasters. Staff of the department participate in Local, Regional, State, and Federal committees for California and Southern California Emergency Services.

As part of this planning, the Office of Emergency Services has developed and maintains an inventory of facilities for shelter, has established a capability to supply shelters with necessary materials to

function, and has provided pre-designated evacuation routes for disaster events including dam failures, hazardous materials spills, earthquakes, tsunamis, and wildfires.

4.19.2 Impacts

Future development will occur during the planning period which will impact existing and future law enforcement, custody and detention and court facilities and services. In addition, natural and manmade emergencies/disasters may impact County facilities and services.

Law Enforcement Facilities and Services

Increased population throughout the County and higher densities in the incorporated cities served by the Sheriff's Department (Camarillo, Fillmore, Moorpark, Ojai and Thousand Oaks) may have a significant impact on law enforcement services including potentially longer response times. Additional development in the contract cities will increase traffic levels resulting in the likelihood for more accidents and require contract cities to budget for additional Sheriff's personnel for traffic enforcement. Additional development will hasten the cumulative need for additional Sheriff personnel, equipment and facilities.

Custody and Detention Facilities

With harsher sentencing laws, increases in the number of inmates have grown faster than the County wide population growth, once viewed as a yardstick to determine the number of cells needed. However, with the construction of the Todd Road facility in 1996, the overcrowding situation has diminished.

Court Facilities and Services

Growth in population, increased crime rates and effective law enforcement, along with a high conviction rate and increased litigation, are all factors in contributing to the impact of needed additional Court personnel, equipment and facilities. A related issue is the large expense involved in constructing a court and then staffing it with judges, court reporters, bailiffs and other personnel. The above factors would increase the need for additional Custody/Detention court personnel, equipment and facilities.

Emergency Services

The Sheriff's Department Office of Emergency Services has developed procedures to be followed during natural and man-made disasters. If utilized in response to a disaster, these procedures will seek to reduce the impacts of disaster upon the residents of Ventura County. Overall future growth will impact the level of services provided by the Office of Emergency Services. It will be necessary for the County Board of Supervisors to provide adequate funding and additional personnel and equipment in order to maintain an adequate level of emergency services.

4.19.3 Mitigation Measures

The Sheriff's Department Research and Planning continues to ensure that an adequate level of law enforcement and related services can be provided by reviewing discretionary development applications. Utilization of the current policies as described in the General Plan *Goals, Policies and Programs* along with the following requirements, also generally used by the Ventura County Fire Protection District, can help reduce potential crime, improve patrol and emergency access and circulation, and help reduce accidents and traffic problem impacts of to a less than significant level by conditioning discretionary development to:

- Provide adequate site security during the construction phase.
- Provide adequate security lighting.
- Avoid landscaping which interferes with police surveillance.
- Limit length of cul-de-sacs to 800 feet.
- Construction standards for private, all-whether roads.

- Need for second means of access (or emergency access in lieu of second access).
- Improve access clearance.
- Require that street names and addresses of structures are a prerequisite to occupancy.

This amendment to the County General Plan does not explicitly provide for the financing or construction of additional Sheriff facilities, or for the provision and financing of additional Sheriff personnel to meet future demands for Sheriff services.

The Sheriff's Department is responsible for obtaining financing from the County Board of Supervisors along with obtaining State and Federal monies to construct the additional needed facilities and obtain necessary equipment and personnel to make these facilities operational.

The cumulative growth of Ventura County during the planning period will generate a need for additional sheriff, custody (detention and jail and court facilities) plus necessary equipment and personnel to make these facilities operational. Construction of the following capital projects in the past two decades helped to meet the present level of law enforcement facilities and services:

- The new East Valley Law Enforcement Facility.
- The County constructed a 600 bed sentenced inmate jail facility to mitigate the impact of overcrowding.
- Work Furlough building improvements at the present site at the Camarillo Airport resulted in the addition of 30 beds at the end of 1987 and an additional 60 beds at the end of 1988.
- A new East County Courthouse helps provide additional Municipal Courtrooms needed for the east part of the County with provisions to temporarily house inmates during Court proceedings.

The General Plan *Goals, Policies and Programs* contains the following policies to mitigate law enforcement and emergency services impacts:

4.7.2 Policies

1. The Sheriff's Department shall continue to review *discretionary* permits to ensure that an adequate level of law enforcement can be provided.
2. *Discretionary development* shall be conditioned to provide adequate site security during the construction phase (e.g., licensed security guard and/or fencing around the construction site, and all construction equipment, tools, and appliances to be properly secured and serial numbers recorded for identification purposes).
3. *Discretionary development* shall be conditioned to provide adequate security lighting (e.g., parking lots to be well lighted with a minimum 1 foot candle of light at ground level, lighting devices to be protected from the elements and constructed of vandal resistant materials and located high enough to discourage anyone on the ground from tampering with them).
4. *Discretionary development* shall be conditioned to avoid landscaping which interferes with police surveillance (e.g., landscaping must not cover any exterior door or window, landscaping at entrances and exits or at any parking lot intersection must not block or screen the view of a seated driver from another moving vehicle or pedestrian, trees must not be placed underneath any overhead light fixture which would cause a loss of light at ground level).
5. The County Sheriff's Department shall maintain mutual aid agreements with incorporated cities to assure efficient service delivery and law protection to all areas of the County.

The County Planning Division reviews discretionary development with regard to location in conjunction with of input from the Sheriff Department and VCFPD. The two entities cooperate in establishing wildfire response and evacuation plans, as envisioned in the Ventura County Multi-Hazard Functional Emergency Response Plan.

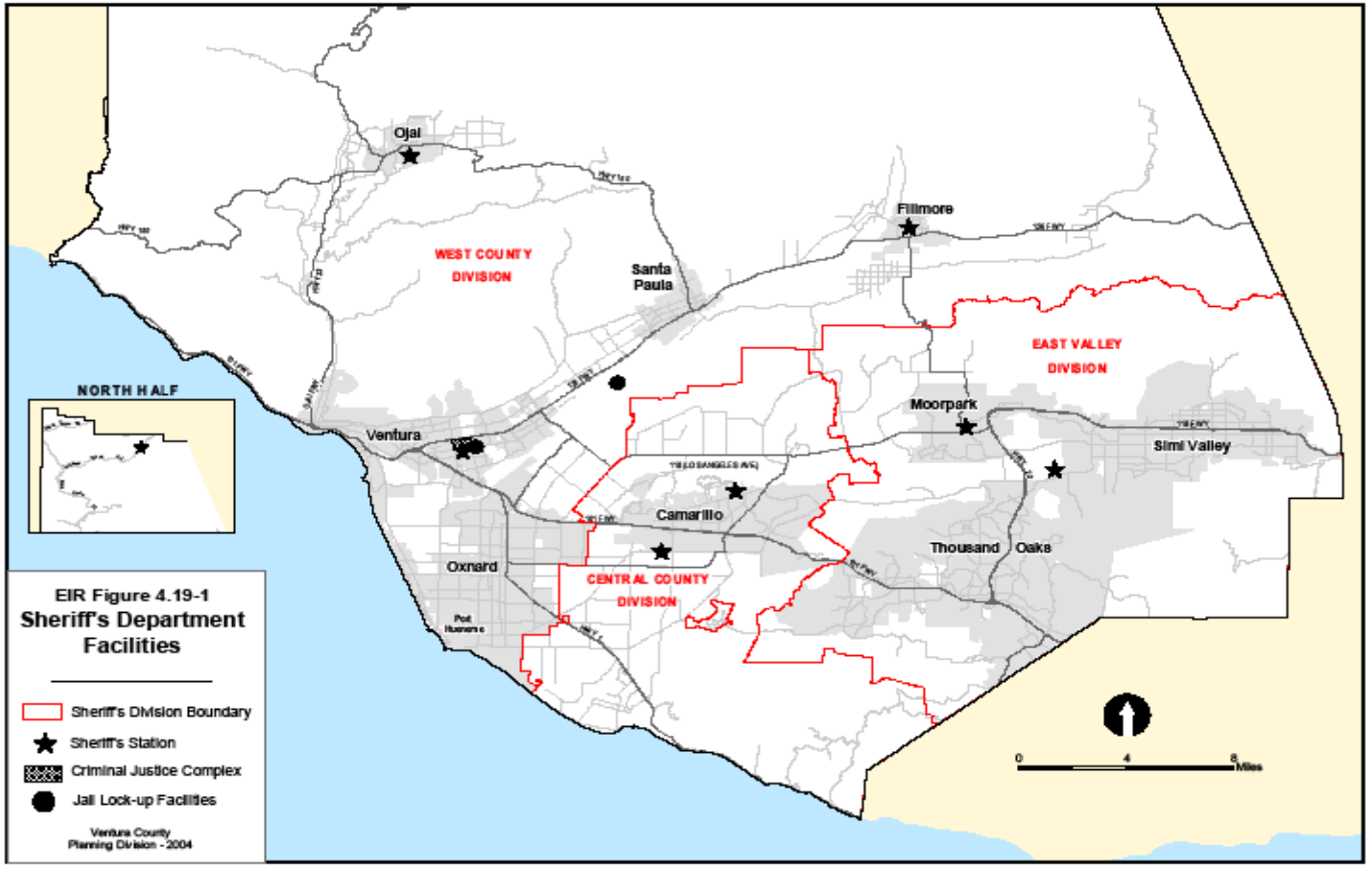
Additionally, the following mitigation measures are also available:

- Request of the Board for additional personnel based on officer-to-population ratio, calls for service, area to be served, and response times.
- Establish a Community Service District.
- Request of the Board for additional funds for new facilities and/or upgrading of existing facilities.
- Establish Sheriff's facilities fees in the unincorporated portion of any service area.

4.19.4 Residual Impact

The passage of Ordinance 4088 provided a protective measure of funding sources for the Sheriff's Department for that agency to keep up with the growing demands of an urbanizing county. As this date, no residual impacts are anticipated as a result of these proposed General Plan amendments.

Figure 4.19-1
Sheriff's Department Facilities



4.20 Education Facilities and Services

The Ventura County *Initial Study Assessment Guidelines* define the criteria and methodology for determining whether a proposed project may have a significant adverse impact on educational facilities and services. This includes both direct impacts and increased demand on school facilities at elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels as well as public library facilities and services. Any residential project (excluding senior housing) that would have a significant physical impact on school facilities or would substantially interfere with the operation of an existing school facility, or exacerbate overcrowded conditions at an existing school, would create a significant impact. Likewise, all residential projects that would substantially interfere with the operation of an existing public library facility or create additional demands on a public library facility that is already overcrowded would generate a significant impact.

4.20.1 Environmental Setting

The majority of students served by public schools in the County are located within incorporated cities. With few exceptions, the same schools serve students residing in unincorporated areas. Students residing in outlying unincorporated areas such as Lockwood Valley or northern Ventura County are served by public schools located in Santa Barbara County or Kern County. A detailed list of the unified school districts, private schools, and the public elementary and secondary schools in the County is provided in Section 4.9.1 of the *Public Facilities and Services Appendix* of the County General Plan. A map of County library facilities and public schools is shown in Figure 4.20-1.

The Ventura County Community College District (VCCD) provides public community college education by operating three colleges in the county: Moorpark College, Oxnard College, and Ventura College. In addition, satellite-learning centers operated by these colleges are located in Camarillo and Santa Paula and selected courses are offered to students on-line.

In Fall 2002, the California State University system opened California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI) south of Camarillo. This school filled a gap in Ventura County by providing access to the first public university for county residents. Enrollment for the 2003-04 school year was 1,623 students, with projected increases over a 20-year period expected to result in a cumulative enrollment of 15,000 students by 2025.

Library services in the County are provided by four independent public library jurisdictions: Ventura County Library Services Agency, the City of Oxnard, Blanchard-Santa Paula Public Library District, and the City of Thousand Oaks. The County Library Services Agency operates 15 community and special libraries located throughout Ventura County. Current library holdings are listed in Figure 4.20-2.

4.20.2 Impact Analysis

Figures 3.3.1, 3.3.2, and 3.4.1 of the General Plan Land Use Appendix detail the population, dwelling unit, and employment forecasts adopted by the Ventura Council of Governments on February 22, 2001, and incorporated into the General Plan on June 19, 2001. These figures have been modified with the addition of 2000 Federal Census population data and estimates of employment and dwelling units in the year 2000 that replace earlier estimates. In addition, the time horizon for the forecasts was increased from 2010 to 2020. The new projections reveal a steady increase in the County's population, which would have a direct impact on both school enrollment at all levels (elementary, secondary, community college, and university) and on library services.

The population increases projected to occur in the cities and in unincorporated areas between 2000 and 2020 (161,811 persons) would generate additional students that would impact existing and future educational facilities and services throughout the County. Increases in enrollment would be the result of both new housing growth and larger demographic and societal changes. New homes on average have a higher student generation rate than older homes. However, the relative affordability of that housing will likely impact the number of school age children. Future enrollment in Ventura county schools would also be determined by the net in-migration of new children to existing housing stock as

units are resold, the popularity of private schools, the birthrate among Ventura County residents, cultural and religious factors affecting household size, the number of new housing units being constructed, and the extent to which Ventura County attracts larger households similar to or different from statewide demographic trends.

Enrollments would likewise be impacted by demographic trends such as the high birth rate of the early 1990s (the "baby boom echo") and the projected increase in the number of baby boomers (children born 1946 to 1964) who are retiring. The baby boom echo of the 1990s generated a large number of students that are currently moving through the middle school grades and will produce enrollment growth in high schools over the next five years. The number of baby boomers who reach retirement age and find Ventura County an attractive place to retire may also impact school enrollment, thereby potentially decreasing the impact of population growth on student generation.

According to the County Superintendent of Schools Office, virtually every public school district in the County has schools that are operating at or near capacity. Additional residential development that adds to the cumulative number of school age children in the county without provisions for additional facilities could compound existing overcrowding and have other adverse impacts on educational programs. Overcrowding impacts both classrooms and facilities that have limited space and often results in increased student-teacher ratios. This in turn results in diminished individual instruction and poorer learning conditions. In order to adequately manage projected enrollment increases, more teachers and support staff would need to be hired and new schools constructed. Currently, overcrowding in many County schools is being controlled through the use of temporary portables in lieu of permanent classroom construction.

Financing for California public schools relies heavily on the state, local property taxes, the federal government, and the California State Lottery. However, because property tax based funding for capital improvements has historically lagged behind enrollment growth (in 1978 Propositions 13 and 4 placed significant limitations on these property taxes), schools have become increasingly dependent on impact fees assessed on residential development and state funding from voter approved bond measures. Beginning with the passage of Proposition 1A in 1998, state bonds have been used to fund modernization and increased capacity at public schools. In addition, in 1996 most public elementary schools earmarked significant funds to reducing and maintaining K-3 classes at no more than 20 students per teacher. Some of these schools are now increasing class sizes at the third grade level in response to overall reductions in state education funding, thereby reducing the need for additional classrooms.

The State Department of Finance projects that the number of students attending kindergarten through twelfth grade in Ventura County will increase from 140,156 in 2000 to 150,397 in 2010. The sharpest enrollment increases are projected between 2000 and 2005. The overall 7.3% increase in enrolled students includes projected enrollment decreases in the 2008 and 2009 school years. The State Department of Finance does not forecast enrollments beyond 2011, however staff estimates the countywide student population will range from 159,672 to 161,386 students by 2020. (This is a simplified projection that does not take into account variations in demographic trends or housing growth, but recognizes a slightly lower student generation rate from 2010 to 2020.) Based on this projection, there would be a countywide increase of 19,617 to 21,230 students by the year 2020. Utilizing an average classroom size of 25 students, this increase would require the construction of 784 to 849 additional classrooms by 2020.

Although school district boundaries do not follow city boundaries, by relying on population growth in various jurisdictions of the County as a simplified variable, some general assumptions can be made as to how local enrollments will impact capacity. Updated Figure 3.3.1 of the *Land Use Appendix* reveals that population growth will be centered in urban centers, with major increases in the west county communities of Camarillo, Oxnard, and Ventura. Likewise, moderate increases are expected in the east county communities of Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks, and Moorpark. Growth in incorporated cities will comprise approximately 13% of total population growth in the County, with unincorporated areas growing at a notably faster rate. Some areas of the county are projected to experience very little growth. Port Hueneme is projected to be built-out by 2005 and growth in unincorporated Piru remains flat through 2020. In actual numbers, smaller cities like Ojai, Santa Paula, and Fillmore show marginal

growth when compared to the larger urban areas. Thus, increased student enrollments are likely to be an issue in the larger cities. The addition of new schools and/or the shifting of district boundaries or school sites to accommodate new growth in these areas are likely to occur.

The State Department of Finance also projects that the number of high school graduates will increase from 7,468 in 2001 to 9,810 in 2010. Reflecting a statewide trend, high school dropout rates have been steadily decreasing since 1990. In the 2001-02 school year, the dropout rate among high school students in Ventura County was 1.7%. Ventura Community College District officials estimate that 60% of high school graduates go on to some form of higher education, including the Community College District. The addition of the California State University Channel Islands campus may draw away potential Community College District students, resulting in a lesser impact on future Community College facilities. Or, the existence of a four-year university in the County could stimulate more high school graduates to continue with higher education; some may enroll at a community college for their first two years to take advantage of lower tuition fees and then transfer to CSUCI. Under this scenario, demands on the community college system may actually increase with the addition of the university.

Future population growth would impact the four public library service agencies in the County by increasing utilization of library facilities and services. This increase in utilization would likely increase demands for book acquisition, the purchase of other library materials (videos, periodicals, etc.), additional library personnel, and expanded (or new) library facilities. The need for services, such as internet and computer access at the public libraries, would also grow accordingly.

Based on a County Library System Agency formula for determining facilities expansion needs (0.55 square feet of facility space per capita), the 2000-2020 increase in Countywide population of 161,811 people would generate the need for 88,996 additional square feet of library space by the year 2020. These needs would be the most pressing in the cities projected to grow significantly such as Oxnard, Camarillo, Ventura, Simi Valley, and Thousand Oaks.

4.20.3 Mitigation Measures

State law sets forth the parameters under which school districts and local government can require developers to pay school facility fees to offset the cost of new classrooms that are necessary to accommodate the increase in school aged children/youth. In accordance with State law, developers will pay an amount as prescribed under State law, unless the school district finds that these fees are insufficient, in which case the following school facilities funding options may be available:

1. The district could impose an alternative fee exaction per Government Code Section 65995.5, which requires the following findings:

    a. The district makes an application for construction funding from the State Allocation Board and that the State Allocation Board has failed to notify the district within 120 days that the district is eligible for funding.

    b. The school district conducts a school facility needs analysis per Government Code Section 65995.6

    c. The district satisfies at least two of the following requirements:

        (1) At least 30% of the students are on a multi-track year-round schedule.

        (2) A general obligation bond to finance school facilities received at least 50% voter approval within the past 4 years.

        (3) The district has issued depbt or incurred obligations for capital outlay equal to 15% to 30% of the district's local bonding capacity

        (4) At least 20% of the teaching stations within the district are relocatable classrooms.

2. The district, or both the district and the County jointly could incorporate existing school repair, and new school construction costs into a development fee per Government Code Section 66000. This school funding option is also subject to the limitations set forth in Section 65995 above.

3. The district could draft, promote and pass a bond measure to finance school projects.
4. The County could adopt an ordinance per Government Code Section 65974 to require developers to pay fees or provide land for school facilities or both. However, this requirement is based upon school district making statutory findings regarding overcrowded conditions and that all reasonable means for addressing the overcrowded conditions have been exhausted.

The following programs within the existing General Plan *Goals, Policies and Programs* address increases in school enrollments and demands on library services resulting from future development that would occur as proposed on the General Land Use Map:

4.9.3-1 states that the Planning Division will continue to work with the County Superintendent of Schools Office and the various school districts in the County concerning school site dedications and fee assessments.

4.9.3-2 states that the Planning Division will continue to coordinate an exchange of information with local school districts regarding school facilities needs in conjunction with new residential development.

4.9.3-3 requires the Building and Safety Division to collect appropriate development fees for school district projects prior to issuance of building permits.

4.9.3-5 states that the County Library Services Agency will continue to work with cities served in the development of financial partnerships to expand or replace existing facilities.

In addition to these programs, new legislation in the form of California Assembly Bill 1367 passed in 2001 requires more communication between local planning officials and school districts on the siting of schools and better facilities planning. Thus, there are notification requirements for amendments to the County General Plan when it may impact future school facilities and, likewise, school districts are required to contact local jurisdictions prior to approval of a school facility needs analysis or other long range educational plan. These notification requirements create a mechanism by which school districts and local governments can provide early notice and adequate information on one another's land use decisions. However, some school districts contend that the constraints under state law are too onerous and, subsequently, infeasible to implement.

Based on the above analysis, it is concluded that the increases in population as recognized by the proposed General Plan Update may have significant impacts on educational facilities and library services and facilities. It is assumed that new schools/school expansions would be financed and built as needed in the various school districts using state funds and steadily increasing local development impact fees. Implementation of the above General Plan policies and programs and improved communication between school districts and local jurisdictions (as required by legislative mandate) will likely help mitigate, but not remove the adverse impacts of population growth on schools.

Cumulative population growth will generate additional demand for library services that is not likely to be met; thus, all residential projects would contribute to a significant impact on public libraries.

4.20.4 Residual Impacts

New school construction and expansion is expected to continue as the County population increases and the thresholds for financing of new schools are met. Impacts on schools may be significant if unexpected growth occurs prior to adequate expansion of school facilities.

Due to budget constraints, it is unlikely that financing or construction of additional County library facilities will occur in the near term. Therefore, the impact of population growth on library services would be significant, adverse and immitigable.

Figure 4.20-1
County Library Facilities and Public Schools

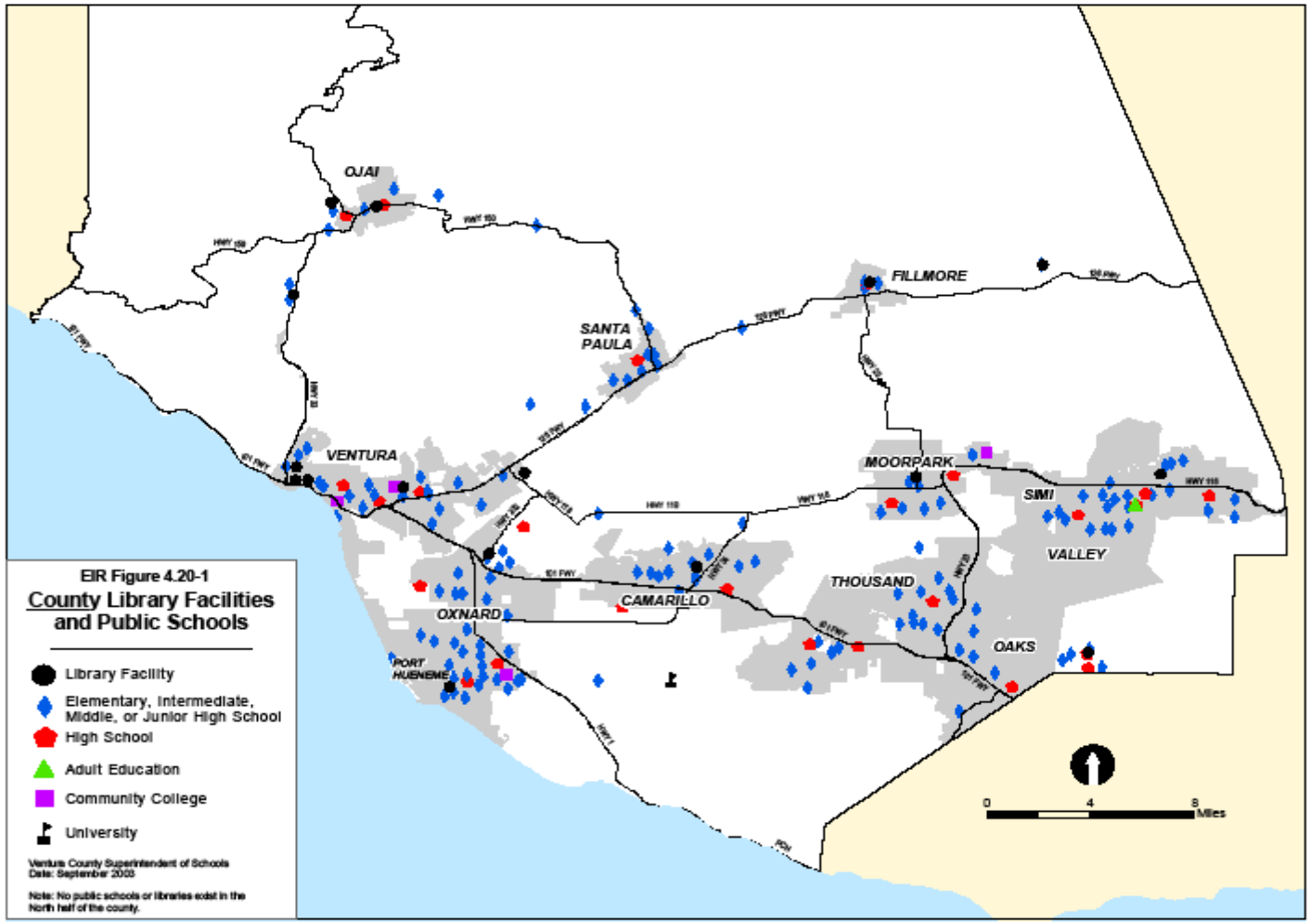


Figure 4.20-2
Ventura County Libraries

LIBRARY	NUMBER OF BOOKS IN COLLECTION
AVENUE LIBRARY 807 N. Ventura Ave. Ventura 93001	23,000
CAMARILLO LIBRARY 3100 Ponderosa Dr. Camarillo 93010	106,000
FILLMORE LIBRARY 502 Second St. Fillmore 93015	32,000
E. P. FOSTER LIBRARY 651 E. Main St. Ventura 93001	121,000
MEINERS OAKS LIBRARY 114 N. Padre Juan Ave. Meiners Oaks 93023	15,000
OAK PARK LIBRARY 899 N. Kanan Rd. Agoura 91301	26,000
OAK VIEW LIBRARY 469 N. Ventura Ave. Oak View 93022	20,000
OJAI LIBRARY 111 E. Ojai Ave. Ojai 93023	48,000
PIRU LIBRARY 3811 E. Center St. Piru 93040	20,000
RAY D. PRUETER LIBRARY 510 Park Ave. Port Hueneme 93041	58,000
SATICOY LIBRARY 11426 Violeta St. Ventura 93004	25,000
SIMI VALLEY LIBRARY 2969 Tapo Canyon Rd. Simi Valley 93063	135,000
H. P. WRIGHT LIBRARY 57 Day Rd. Ventura 93003	85,000

Source: Ventura County Library, January 2003
Note: This list includes all libraries operated by the County of Ventura Library Services Agency. It does not include city library systems in Oxnard, Thousand Oaks, and Santa Paula.

4.21 Recreation Facilities

The term Recreational Facilities includes facilities and services related to providing recreation on a countywide basis for the citizens of Ventura County. It includes the following terms:

Local Parks/Facilities - A local park/facility serves the daily needs of a defined neighborhood or group of neighborhoods within an unincorporated urbanized area of the county. Local park acreage should provide for three primary types of recreation: open areas for passive recreation and relaxation; active sports areas for sports fields and court games; and neighborhood or community centers which accommodate a wide variety of community serving activities catering to all age groups. Local parks are divided into three major classes -- neighborhood park, community park facilities and playfields, and local trails/corridors.

Regional Park/Facilities - A regional park/facility is an extent of land that, by its unique, natural character or unusual or extensive development, offers recreation opportunities that attract patronage from beyond the local vicinity without regard to physical, political, or municipal boundaries. There is no defined service radius. Regional park/facilities are divided into four major classes: regional park, recreation park preserve, regional open space and specialized facility.

Regional Trails/Corridors - Regional trails/corridors include facilities that are intended to accommodate non-motorized recreational travel. Regional trails/corridors are intended to link major park and recreation facilities. They may be designated as single purpose and/or multi-purpose by design (e.g., pedestrian, bicycle, equestrian) and major access points are served by a trailhead.

A project will have a significant impact on recreation if it would cause an increase in the demand for recreation in an area when measured against the following standards:

Local Parks/Facilities - 5 acres of developable land (less than 15% slope) per 1000 population.

Regional Parks/Facilities - 5 acres of developable land per 1000 population.

Regional Trails/Corridors - 2.5 miles per 1000 population.

A project will also have a significant impact on recreation if it would impede future development of Recreation Parks/Facilities and/or Regional Trails/Corridors.

4.21.1 Environmental Setting

Within Ventura County many agencies provide recreation facilities. The cities and Recreation and Park Districts focus on providing local park facilities. Federal, State and quasi-public agencies primarily provide regional facilities. The County of Ventura provides regional facilities Countywide and local facilities in unincorporated urban areas.

Three special Recreation and Park Districts provide local recreation services to urban residents. The Pleasant Valley Recreation and Park District, the Conejo Recreation and Park District, and the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District serve the incorporated municipalities of Camarillo, Thousand Oaks, and Simi Valley, and unincorporated areas located adjacent to their primary cities. Figure 4.21-1 shows the service areas of these districts. A number of unincorporated urban areas exist that are not within the jurisdiction of the cities or of special districts. Over 95,000 people currently reside within the unincorporated territory of Ventura County. Although some of these people receive recreation services from the existing special districts, areas such as the Ventura River Valley, El Rio, Casitas Springs, and Piru, for example, receive recreation services from Ventura County.

In addition to the cities, and Recreation and Park Districts, two independent political jurisdictions provide facilities for recreation use; the Casitas Municipal Water District with its extensive operation at Lake Casitas, and the United Water Conservation District operating facilities at Lake Piru.

The physical setting of Ventura County and its proximity to the Los Angeles metropolitan area has inspired the State of California to acquire and develop extensive recreation facilities along the coastal shoreline to relieve the continuous impact generated from out of County visitors. McGrath, and Point

Mugu State Parks provide overnight accommodations and specialized facilities of statewide significance. Lake Casitas and Lake Piru are also heavily used by this regular influx of visitors from the Southern California metropolitan region. The Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreation Area is an 18,780 acre heavily used off-road vehicle use area which straddles the Los Angeles/Ventura County Line in the northeast corner of the County. Open vehicular use, trail use, competitive events and camping take place there.

In addition to State and local facilities, various Federal facilities are located within the County. The U.S. Forest Service affords recreational resources of statewide significance within its extensive holdings in the Los Padres National Forest. The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and Channel Islands National Park are also located within the County.

Regional services that emphasize day use activities are also provided by each of these levels of government. Both Lake Casitas and Lake Piru offer launching facilities for a variety of boating activities, fishing, and day use picnic areas. The State of California operates day use beaches at San Buenaventura State Beach Park, McGrath State Beach, and Point Mugu State Park.

Recreational boating, sport fishing and swim beaches are provided at the County's two ocean marinas. Channel Islands Harbor in Oxnard is operated by the Ventura County General Services Agency. The Harbor holds 2,300 small craft and future expansion is being planned. Ventura Harbor is operated by the Ventura Port District. Both offer commercially operated recreation activities such as sport fishing, tours, scuba diving and sailing.

The County of Ventura provides recreation services through the General Services Agency. Generally, County policy is to primarily provide regional facilities that serve all residents of the County, and secondarily, to provide local recreation facilities in unincorporated urban communities. The County local park program includes community centers in El Rio and Casitas Springs and community centers with local parks in Oak View, Saticoy and Piru.

With regard to regional park facilities, the General Services Agency, Recreation Services was pursuing development of a County Regional Recreation Areas Plan~~;~~ however work on this plan has been suspended due to financial constraints of the County. This plan was intended to identify facility needs, establish criteria for facility development and delineate priorities for new facilities. The County currently owns 24 regional parks.

A complete list of regional recreational facilities within Ventura County, including Federal, State, County, quasi-public and local facilities, can be found in section 4.10 of the *Public Facilities and Services Appendix* of the County General Plan.

Although the County Board of Supervisors “conceptually” approved the *Regional Trails and Pathways Plan* in the early 1990’s, the County has no formal plan for the development or maintenance of public hiking, biking or equestrian trails.

4.21.2 Impacts

The following impacts are likely to occur:

- Demand for recreation facilities exists and will increase with population.
- Cooperation between agencies can enhance recreational use of existing facilities.
- Development may obstruct access to trails and public lands.

Recreation related impacts, aside from disruption of existing facilities, generally fall within four broad categories: residential development that would create additional demand for recreational facilities, development that would obstruct access to an existing public recreation resource or facility, development that would preclude public acquisition of a particularly valuable recreation resource such as a lake or trail link, and lastly, the impacts generated by recreation facilities.

To the extent that some areas of the County currently are experiencing a shortfall in the provision of recreation facilities, this impact will be perpetuated and perhaps exacerbated by the population increase allowed by the County and Cities’ General Plans.

New residential development will create additional demand for park facilities which may go partially unmet and may cause overcrowding at existing facilities. The parkland dedication ordinance may only be partially effective in mitigating this impact, since the payment of fees in-lieu of dedication of parkland may not result in accrual of sufficient funds to purchase parkland in the event that in-lieu fees "trickle-in" in small amounts and/or acceptable parcels of purchasable land is unavailable. In fact, to date, no existing County parkland has been acquired via the Parkland Dedication Ordinance. The Parkland Dedication Ordinance only provides for acquisition of land for local parks. It does not provide funds for development or operation of local parks, nor for regional facilities. To allow residential development without meeting the recreation needs of the residents' constitutes a significant adverse effect on human beings.

Obstruction of access to existing public recreation resources and facilities could be created by many types of development that would potentially be allowed by the General Plan.

Of particular significance are projects which would obstruct access to, or along the coastline or public waterways. Blockage of trails or access to trails or public lands is also a potential impact. Access to trails through or public lands is also a potential impact. Access to trails through the Los Padres National Forest has been obstructed or impaired in some cases where trails pass through private property at the periphery of the Forest. The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and various recreation agencies are attempting to establish regional trail networks throughout the County. The development allowed by the General Plan could potentially obstruct establishment of this trail system.

Preclusion of public purchase of potential parkland could conceivably occur due to the development which would be allowed by the General Plan. If a potential recreation resource that has been identified for acquisition by a public recreation agency is allowed to develop, subsequent purchase, with or without condemnation, may be rendered infeasible.

4.21.3 Mitigation Measures

The General Plan *Goals, Policies and Programs* policies that apply to recreation facilities are:

4.10.2-1 The County shall maintain and enforce the local parkland dedication requirements (Quimby Ordinance), to acquire and develop neighborhood and community recreation facilities. Parkland dedication shall be based on a standard of five acres of local parkland per thousand population, including neighborhood and community parks.

4.10.2-2 *Discretionary development* which would obstruct or adversely impact access to a public recreation resource shall be conditioned to provide public access as appropriate.

4.10.2-3 Developers shall be encouraged to make unused open space available for recreation.

4.10.2-4 The County shall require reservation of land for public purchase, pursuant to the County Subdivision Ordinance, where requested by a recreation agency.

4.10.2-5. County facilities (e.g., flood control channels and easements) shall be made available for recreational use as appropriate.

These policies do not address development within the ten incorporated cities and the increased demands on regional facilities within the unincorporated area as a result of urban growth, and they do not address Federal and State owned lands that provide recreational opportunities for the regional population and are adjacent to County land, and any changes that might occur with those facilities.

The Quimby Ordinance fees (policy 4.10.2-1) have not been increased for inflation since the early 1980's, except that a formula exits to reflect fair market value of properties in calculating fees. Since there are no available funds for the maintenance and operation of additional parks, the General Services Agency has not given priority to purchasing additional park land.

The impact from obstruction of access to recreation resources by new development could be mitigated to a less-than-significant level by policy 4.10.2-2 of the *Goals, Policies and Programs* of the General Plan, which requires discretionary development that would obstruct access to provide public access as

appropriate. If, however, feasible mitigation measures (for providing access) are not available and a project is found to have overriding considerations, obstruction of access may occur.

To mitigate the potential impact on local and regional park facilities not met by the above policies, the County could impose increased development mitigation fees and allocate additional funds for park construction and maintenance. These are reflected in the following programs of the *Goals, Policies and Programs* of the General Plan:

4.10.3-1 The General Services Agency will prepare and update a County Recreation Plan to evaluate demand, establish facility needs, and prioritize proposed facility development.

4.10.3-2 The General Services Agency will develop, implement and maintain an ordinance to collect development fees to provide for regional recreation facility development.

4.10.3-3 The General Services Agency will coordinate the location, planning, and functional use of all County recreation facilities with affected local governmental entities and, where feasible, promote joint acquisition and/or development to assure effective coverage of all needs.

4.10.3-5 The General Services Agency shall prepare, for consideration by the Board of Supervisors, a Regional Recreation Facilities Fee Ordinance to fund regional recreational facilities. The proposed funds would finance acquisition of land and construction of a variety of facilities along the regional trails within the General Services Agency's jurisdiction, including equestrian, hiking and backpacking trailheads.

None of these programs is currently funded and are, therefore, infeasible at this time.

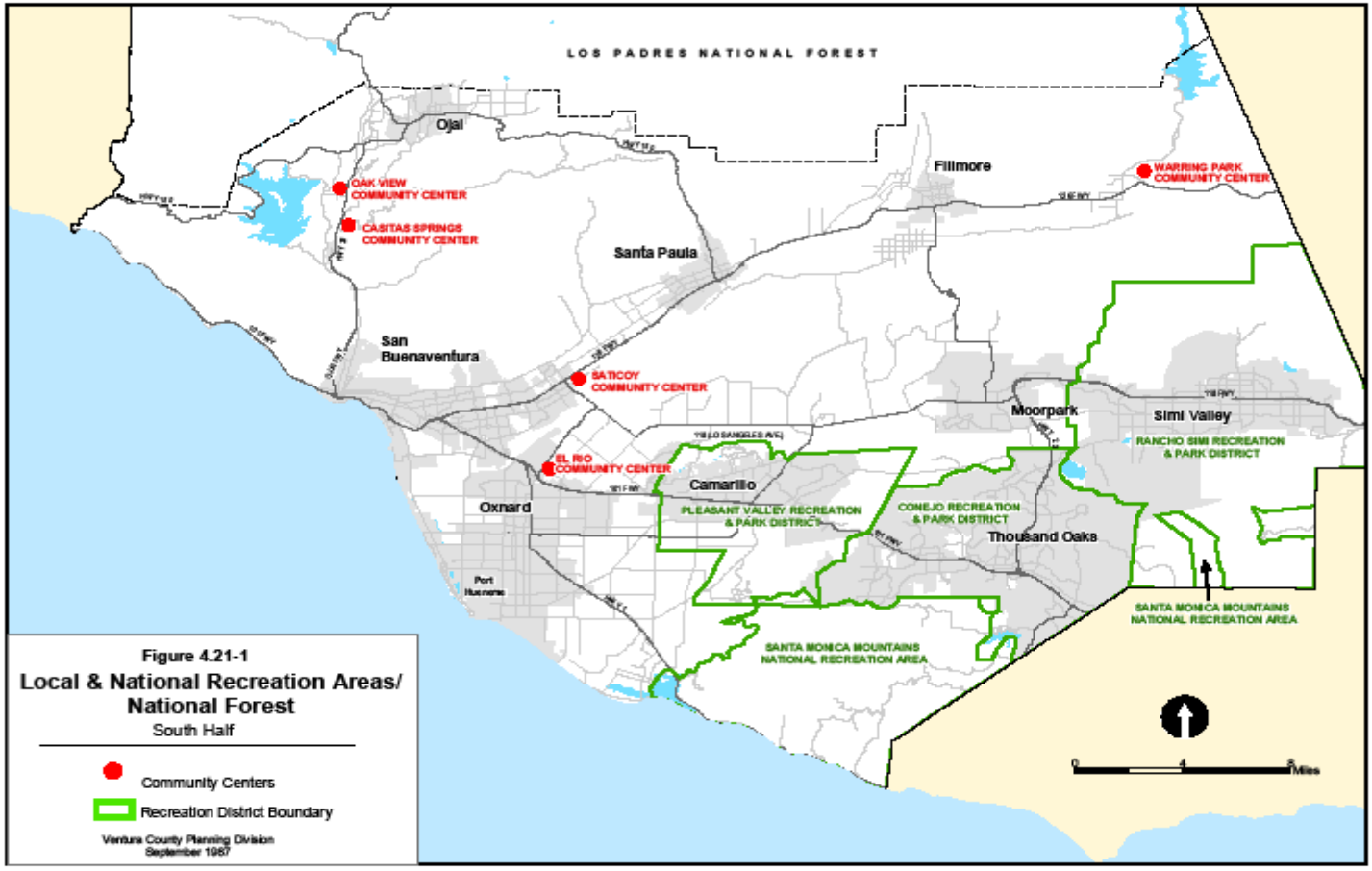
4.21.4 Residual Impact

Quimby fees are currently insufficient to cover the cost of acquiring local park land; therefore the impact caused by increased demand for local parks remains significant.

Discretionary development that would obstruct access to existing recreational facilities could still be approved with overriding considerations if feasible mitigation measures for providing access are not available; therefore, obstruction of access may still occur.

The mitigation measures of implementing increased developer fees to fully fund acquisition, development and maintenance of regional and local recreation facilities would fully mitigate the increased demand for new parks caused by new residents.

Figure 4.21-1
Local & National Recreation Areas/National Forest – South Half



4.22 Community Character

The Ventura County *Initial Study Assessment Guidelines* define the criteria and methodology for determining whether a proposed project may have a significant adverse impact on community character. Community character is defined as the distinctive physical quality, attributes, or features of a community that sets it apart from other communities or areas. All projects would have some degree of impact on community character. Projects that are consistent with the zoning and the General Plan designation would have a less-than-significant impact on the land use of the area when the design/architecture of the project is compatible with the surrounding community. Any project that requires a Zone change and/or General Plan Amendment must be evaluated for its potential to significantly alter or degrade community character.

4.22.1 Environmental Setting

Ventura County contains many existing unincorporated communities that retain a distinctive character. Some, like Camarillo Heights, Montalvo, and Saticoy, are located close to incorporated cities; others are located in rural settings, like Piru, Somis, and Matilija Canyon. Figure 3.6 of the General Plan *Goals, Policies, and Programs* illustrates the relative location of the County's existing communities that are not within an Area Plan, but are depicted on the Existing Community maps and Building Intensity/Population Density Tables (Figures 3.7-3.28). In addition to these communities, there are nine identified geographic areas of the County that have Area Plans that encompass existing communities. These include: Coastal, El Rio/Del Norte, Lake Sherwood/Hidden Valley, North Ventura Avenue, Oak Park, Ojai Valley, Piru, Saticoy, and Thousand Oaks.

The following paragraphs briefly describe each of the existing community areas:

Bell Canyon – This 1,133 acre gated, large-lot residential community is located in east Ventura County, adjacent to Los Angeles County, south of the Santa Susanna Field Lab (aka, Rocketdyne) and north of Ahmanson Ranch (see Figure 3.7 of the *Goals, Policies and Programs*). The residential parcels range from 0.5 acres to 12.24 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 1.13 acres. The zoning is RE-1ac and RE-20,000 sq ft. In addition, there is a two-acre commercial area that serves the community.

Box Canyon – This 68 acre rustic residential community is located along both sides of Box Canyon Road in east Ventura County, adjacent to Los Angeles County and south of the Santa Susanna Existing Community (Figure 3.8 of the *Goals, Policies and Programs*). The residential parcels range from 0.06 acres to 4.00 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.19 acres. The zoning is predominantly RE-20,000 sq ft., with some RE-1ac. Many of the parcels are non-conforming as to parcel size, and many of the parcels have been merged into larger parcels.

Coastal Areas – The coastal area is divided into three subareas, which are discussed below:

1. North Coast Area - Six residential and two industrial "communities" are located in the North Coast area (Figure 1 of the *Coastal Area Plan*). The communities are:

Rincon Point - This nine acre gated residential community is located just east of the Santa Barbara County line, south of Hwy 101. The residential parcels range from 0.11 acres to 0.37 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.18 acres. The zoning is CR1-7,000 sq ft (Coastal Single Family Residential).

La Conchita – This 19 acre residential community is about two miles south of the Santa Barbara County Line, on the north side of Highway 101. The residential parcels range from 0.06 acres to 0.18 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.07 acres. The community is principally zoned "RB" (Residential-Beach), with some "CC" (Coastal Commercial) at the entrance to the community.

Mussel Shoals - This six acre shoreline residential area is located on the south side of Highway 101, in an area known as Punta Gorda. The residential parcels range from 0.06 acres to 0.18 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.08 acres. The community is

principally zoned RB (Residential-Beach), with a small portion zoned CC (Coastal Commercial).

Seacliff - This 11 acre shoreline residential community is located south of Hwy 101 and the Old Coast Highway, and west of Hobson County Park. The residential parcels range from 0.09 acres to 0.16 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.11 acres. The zoning is RB.

Faria – This 21 acre shoreline residential area is located south of Highway 101, 5.5 miles northwesterly of the City of Ventura. The residential parcels range from 0.08 acres to 0.33 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.13 acres. The area is zoned RB.

Solimar – This 29 acre shoreline residential community is located south of the Old Coast Highway, 3.7 miles north of the City of San Buenaventura. The residential parcels range from 0.07 acres to 0.25 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.12 acres. The area is zoned RB.

Mobile-Rincon Industrial – This 395 acre industrial area is located north of Hwy 101, in the vicinity of Punta Gorda and Sea Cliff. The area encompasses two oil and gas processing facilities and undeveloped industrial land. The property is zoned CM (Coastal Industrial).

Philips Industrial – This ten acre oil and gas processing plant is located immediately west of La Conchita. The property is zoned CM (Coastal Industrial).

2. **Central Coast Area** - Two residential "communities" are located in the Central Coast area (Figure 21 of the *Coastal Area Plan*). The communities are:

   Hollywood Beach – This 70 acre residential beach community is located immediately west of the Channel Islands Harbor, adjacent to, and within the Area of Interest of, the City of Oxnard. The residential parcels range from 0.02 acres to 0.18 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.06 acres. The area is principally zoned RBH (Residential Beach-Harbor), with a small amount of CC (Coastal Commercial) zoned land.

   Silverstrand - This 77 acre residential beach community is located immediately southeast of the Channel Islands Harbor, and is adjacent to, and within the Area of Interest of the City of Port Hueneme. The residential parcels range from 0.02 acres to 0.17 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.06 acres. The area is principally zoned RBH (Residential Beach-Harbor), with commercial along Roosevelt Boulevard and Ocean Drive zoned CC (Coastal Commercial).

3. **South Coast Area** – There is one residential community in the South Coast area – ~~**Solimar**~~ **Solromar**. This 63 acre mixed-density residential community is located in the vicinity of the intersection of Pacific Coast Highway (Hwy 1) and Yerba Buena Road, northwesterly of the Los Angeles County line. The residential parcel sizes and densities vary considerably. The area is zoned CRPD (Coastal Residential Planned Development) – 24 du/ac, CRPD-15 du/ac, CRPD-10 du/ac, CRPD-3 du/ac, CR2 (Coastal Two-Family Residential) - 7,000 sq ft, , CRE (Coastal Rural Exclusive) – 20,000 sq ft, CRE-20 ac and CR (Coastal Rural) – 1 ac. There are two youth camps adjacent to the community, which are zoned CRE-5 ac and CRE-20 ac respectively. There is a developed visitor-serving use at the northeast intersection of Yerba Buena Road and Highway 1 and a vacant commercial parcel on the north side of Highway 1 south of Tonga St., both of which are zoned CC (Coastal Commercial).

Camarillo Heights – This 768 acre mixed-density residential community is located north of and adjacent to the City of Camarillo (see Figure 3.9 of the *Goals, Policies and Programs*). The parcels range from 0.11 acres to 13.24 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.37 acres. The zoning consists of a mix of R2, R1-6,000 sq ft, R1-8,000 sq ft, R1-10,000 sq ft, RE-10,000 sq ft, RE-13,000 sq ft, RE-18,000 sq ft, RE-20,000 sq ft, and RE-1ac.

East Santa Paula – This 51 acre mixed use community is located immediately east of the City of Santa Paula and consists of three separate commercial, industrial and residential enclaves (see Figure 3.10 of the *Goals, Policies and Programs*). The zoning consists of M2, CPD, R2 and RE-1ac.

El Rio/Del Norte Area – This 7,000 acre area is located north of Highway 101, south of Highway 118, east of the Santa Clara River, and west of the Revlon Slough, which is within the Oxnard Area of Interest. The area is principally agricultural land with three residential communities and one industrial area, which are described below:

El Rio – This 437 acre area is located north of Highway 101, east of Vineyard Avenue and west of Rose Avenue, just north of the City of Oxnard. The residential parcels range from 0.09 acres to 1.58 acres, with a median parcel size of 0.23 acres. The zoning is predominantly RE-20 ac and R1-6,000 sq ft, with some commercial zoned CPD along Vineyard Avenue and some industrial zoned M2-10,000 sq ft on Cortez St. and Ventura Boulevard The area also has four schools.

Nyeland Acres - This 151 acre mixed use area is located north of Highway 101 and east of Santa Clara Road. The area mainly consists of residential parcels with some commercial and industrial along Ventura Boulevard, which runs parallel with Highway 101. The residential parcels range from 0.09 acres to 2.00 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.44 acres. The residential parcels are zoned RE-10,000 sq ft, while the commercial and industrial parcels are zoned CPD and M2-10,000 sq ft.

Strickland Acres – This 101 acre area is located north of Central Avenue, east of Vineyard Avenue, and west of Rose Avenue. The residential parcels are zoned R1-6,000 sq ft and RO-20,000 sq ft. They range from 0.14 acres to 0.90 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.16 acres. In addition to the residential properties, the area also includes some commercial properties (zoned CPD) located at the intersection of Central Avenue and Vineyard Avenue, and Rio Mesa High School located along Central Avenue.

Vineyard Industrial Area – This 167 acre industrial area is located just west of Vineyard Avenue. The area is zoned M2-10,000 sq ft.

Home Acres – This 207 acre large-lot residential community is located southwest and adjacent to the City of Moorpark, and is accessible from Hitch Boulevard (see Figure 3.11 of the Goals, Policies and Programs). The residential parcels range from 0.19 acres to 7.94 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.88 acres. The zoning is entirely RE-20,000 sq ft.

~~**La Cumbre Road** – This 235 acre large-lot residential community is located in the Las Posas Valley northeast of the community of Somis (see Figure 3.112 of the Goals, Policies and Programs). The residential parcels range from 0.50 acres to 18.24 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 1.01 acres. The zoning is a predominantly RE-1ac, with some RO-20,000 sq ft.~~

Lake Sherwood/Hidden Valley Area- This 8,724 acre area is located south and west of the City of Thousand Oaks, northwest of the Los Angeles County line and north of the crest of the Santa Monica Mountains, and encompasses three distinct areas, which are described below:

Lake Sherwood – This 996 acre gated community is located west of the City of Thousand Oaks. The residential parcels surround a 154 acre man made lake and range in size from 0.03 acres to 26.61 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.33 acres. The zoning consists of a mix of RPD-1 du/ac, RPD-4 du/ac, RE-10,000 sq ft, RE-1 ac, RE-4 ac, RE-5 ac, and RO-25,000 sq ft. In addition to the above zoning, the entire area is subject to a Scenic Resource Protection overlay zone. The area also includes a private 18-hole golf course.

Hidden Valley – This 3,912 acre area is located west of Lake Sherwood, south of the City of Thousand Oaks, and is accessible via Potrero Rd. The property is Agricultural and Open Space with parcels zoned AE-40 ac, AE-80 ac, OS-20 ac, OS-40 ac, OS-80 ac, and OS-160 ac.

Carlisle Road – This 2,288 acre Open Space area is located south of Lake Sherwood, northwest of the Los Angeles County line, and is accessible via Carlisle Road. The parcels in this area are zoned OS-20 ac, OS-160 ac, with a small portion subject to the SRP (Scenic Resource Protection) overlay zone.

Las Posas Estates – This 781 acre large-lot residential community and golf course is located northwest and adjacent to the City of Camarillo (see Figure 3.13 of the *Goals, Policies and Programs*). The residential parcels range from 0.23 acres to 7.08 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.62 acres. The zoning consists of a mix of RE-20,000 sq ft, RPD-1 du/ac, RE-1ac, RA-1ac, RE-20 ac.

Las Posas Valley Area - This 25,496 acre area is located north of the City of Camarillo, south of the Santa Clara River Valley, east of the La Vista Avenue and west of the City of Moorpark. This area has several distinct urban and rural communities/areas, which are described below:

Somis – This 96 acre mixed-use community is located in the center of the Las Posas Valley, north of the City of Camarillo, and consists of three separate areas containing residential, industrial and commercial land uses (see Figure 3.23 of the *Goals, Policies and Programs*). The residential parcels range from 0.10 acres to 2.41 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.23 acres. The zoning consists of R1-6,000 sq ft, R2, RE-10,000 sq ft., RE-1ac, RE-5ac, CO, C1 and M2.

La Cumbre/Donlon Road – This 346 acre large-lot, rural residential community is located in northeast of the community of Somis, north of Highway 118, east of Sand Canyon Road and west of Donlon Road (see Figure 3.12 of the Goals, Policies and Programs). The parcels range from 0.50 acres to 18.24 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 1.04 acres. The zoning consists of RE-1ac, RO-20,000 sq ft., RA-2ac and RA-5ac.

Groves 1& 2 – This 420 acre rural residential area is located northerly of the terminus of Donlon Road, east of Bradley Road, and west of Sand Canyon Road. The parcels range from 1.45 acres to 22.23 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 2.48 acres. The area is zoned RA-2ac.

Groves 3 - This 106 acre rural residential area is located southerly of Highway 118 and west of Bradley Road. The parcels range from 2.44 acres to 6.13 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 2.85 acres. The area is zoned RA-2ac.

Matilija Canyon – This approximately 13~~1~~2 acre rustic, large-lot residential community is located north of Matilija Canyon Dam in the Ojai Valley area (see Figure 3.13~~4~~ of the *Goals, Policies and Programs*). The entire area is owned by one party, who leases individual parcels to the homeowners/residents. The zoning is RA-1 ac.

Mission Rock Road – This 91 acre industrial community is located between the cities of Ventura and Santa Paula, north of the Santa Clara River (see Figure 3.14~~5~~ of the *Goals, Policies and Programs*). The most predominant land use is automobile recycling and storage businesses.

Montalvo – This 49 acre mixed-use community is located in and completely surrounded by the City of Ventura, north of Highway 101 (see Figure 3.16 of the *Goals, Policies and Programs*). The residential parcels range from 0.15 acres to 0.31 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.17 acres. The zoning is predominantly a mix of R1-6,000 sq ft and R2, with CPD zoning along Ventura Boulevard and Victoria Avenue.

North Fork Springs – This 46 acre rustic, large-lot residential community is located east of Maricopa Highway (Hwy 33), north of the Ojai Valley (see Figure 3.17 of the *Goals, Policies and Programs*). The residential parcels range from 0.23 acres to 2.35 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 1.15 acres. The zoning is RA-1 ac.

North Santa Paula – This 42 acre residential community is comprised of two separate single-family residential enclaves located north of and adjacent to the City of Santa Paula (see Figure 3.18 of the *Goals, Policies and Programs*). The residential parcels range from 0.11 acres to 4.74 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.28 acres. The zoning consists of R1-6,000 sq ft, R1-10,000 sq ft, and RE-1 ac.

North Simi – This 121 acre residential community is comprised of six separate single-family residential enclaves located on the north side of, and surrounded by the City of Simi Valley (see Figure 3.19 of the *Goals, Policies and Programs*). The residential parcels range from 0.22 acres

to 5.30 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.26 acres. The zoning is predominantly RE-10,000 sq ft, with some RE-1ac.

Oak Park Area – This 2,855 acre mixed-density, suburban residential area is located in east Ventura County, north of the City of Agoura Hills and east of the City of Thousand Oaks. Most of this area has been constructed within the past 30 years. The residential parcels sizes and densities vary considerably. The residential area is zoned RPD and R1-6,000 sq ft. In addition to residential uses, the area contains two commercial areas zoned CPD and six schools.

Ojai Valley Area – This 77,856 acre area is located north of the terminus of the Highway 33 freeway, south of the Los Padres National Forest, east of the Santa Barbara County line and west of Koenigstein Road, and surrounds the City of Ojai. This area has several distinct urban and rural communities/areas, which are described below:

Casitas Springs –This 91 acre rustic community is located east of the Ventura River, north of the City of Ventura, and south of the Oak View community along Highway 33. The residential parcels range from 0.06 acres to 4.18 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.27 acres. The residential zoning consists of a mix of RE, RPD, and R1. In addition to the residential area, there is a small commercial area zoned CPD located near the corner of Highway 33 and Nye Road.

Casitas Vista – This 42 acre rustic residential community is located north of Foster Park, and west of the Ventura River near the intersection of Casitas Vista Road and Santa Ana Road. The residential parcels range from 0.08 acres to 3.28 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.20 acres. The parcels in this area are zoned RE-1 ac, RE-2 ac, and RE-20,000 sq ft with about a third of the area subject to the SRP overlay zone.

Live Oak Acres – This 154 acre residential community is located northwest of the Oak View community, west of the Ventura River, and east of Santa Ana Road. The residential parcels range from 0.07 acres to 4.72 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.47 acres. The residential parcels are zoned RE-1 ac, RE-20,000 sq ft, RPD-13 du/ac, and RPD-10 du/ac. In addition to the residential, the area contains a small commercial and industrial area zoned CPD and M2-10,000 sq ft.

Los Encinos – This 54 acre large-lot, residential community is located west of the Ventura River, south of State Highway 150, and north of the Live Oak Acres community along Burnham Road. The residential parcels range from 0.14 acres to 3.53 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.52 acres. The zoning primarily consists of R1-20,000 sq ft with one parcel zoned RPD-6 du/ac.

Meiners Oaks – This 274 acre mixed use community is located west of the City of Ojai, north of the Mira Monte community, and east of the Ventura River. The residential parcels range from 0.05 acres to 4.79 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.17 acres. The residential parcels consist of a mix of R1, RE, and RPD. The community also contains a commercial area zoned CPD, which is located along El Roblar Drive.

Mira Monte – This 1,117 acre mixed use community is located southwest of the City of Ojai, south of the Meiners Oaks community, and east of the Ventura River. The residential parcels range from 0.07 acres to 5.27 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.26 acres. The residential parcels consist of a mix of R1, RPD, and RE. The area also contains several commercial areas zoned CPD and two special purpose areas zoned TP-160 ac.

Oak View – This 386 acre mixed use community is located east of the Ventura River, south of the Mira Monte community, and north of the Casitas Springs community along Highway 33. The residential parcels range from 0.06 acres to 6.63 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.18 acres. The zoning consists of a mix of R1, R2, RE, CPD, and M1-10,000 sq ft.

Siete Robles – This 35 acre residential community is located just east of the City of Ojai, and south of State Highway 150 near Gorham Road. The residential parcels range from 0.17 acres to 1.19 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.29 acres. The zoning for this area is entirely R1-10,000 sq ft.

Summit – This 49 acre rustic residential community is located approximately 6 miles east of the City of Ojai along State Highway 150. The residential parcels range from 0.15 acres to 2.31 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.36 acres. The residential parcels are zoned R1-10,000 sq ft and a mix of RE. The area also contains commercial and industrial properties zoned CPD and M1-10,000 sq ft.

Tewa/Kenawa - This 12 acre residential community is located just east of the Mira Monte community along Creek Road. The residential parcels range from 0.23 acres to 1.11 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.28 acres. The area is zoned RE-1 ac and RE-20,000 sq ft.

Piru Area – This 44,000 acre area encompasses the entire Piru Area of Interest, which is located north of the crest of the Simi Hills, south of the Las Padres National Forest, east of the Los Angeles County line and west of the Fillmore Area of Interest. The 130 acre Piru urban community is located around the intersection of Main and Center Streets. In addition, there is a 40 acre enclave of commercial and industrial uses located in the vicinity of Main Street and Highway 126. The residential area of the Piru urban community is a mix of turn of the century and newer suburban residential neighborhoods, with housing densities that vary considerably. The residential zoning consists of a mix of RE, RPD and R1-6,000 sq ft.

Santa Rosa Valley – This ~~1,323~~ 1,192 acre large-lot residential estate community is located in the eastern portion of Santa Rosa Valley, south of the City of Moorpark and north of the City of Thousand Oaks (see Figure 3.20 of the *Goals, Policies and Programs*). The area on both sides of Santa Rosa Road that is designated Existing Community contains parcels that range from 0.17 acres to 16.81 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 1.12 acres. The zoning consists of RE-1ac, RA 1ac and RE-2ac. The area surrounding the Existing Community designation contains parcels that range from 0.48 to 9.68 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 5.02 acres. The zoning consists of RA-2ac, RE-5ac, RE-4ac, RA-4ac, RE-5ac, RA-5ac, RE-10ac, and RA-10ac.

Santa Susana Knolls – This 229 acre rustic residential community is located south of the City of Simi Valley and the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way (see Figure 3.21 of the *Goals, Policies and Programs*). The residential parcels range from 0.03 acre to 13.22 acre in area, with a median parcel size of 0.15 acres. The residential zoning is predominantly RE-10,000 sq ft., with some zoned RE-20,000 sq ft, RE-1ac. and RE-5ac. Many of the residential parcels are non-conforming as to parcel size, and many of the parcels have been merged into larger parcels. In addition, there is a 16 acre County park that is zoned RE-10ac. and an eight acre under-developed commercial area that is zoned C1 (Neighborhood Commercial).

Saticoy - This 205 acre urban residential and industrial community is located east of the City of Ventura and northwest of the Santa Clara River. The residential parcel sizes and densities vary considerably. The residential area is zoned R2-7,000 sq ft. In addition to residential uses, the area contains a large amount industrial land zoned M1, M2 and M3. The commercial area along old Los Angeles Avenue and Highway 118 is zoned CPD.

Saticoy Country Club – This 77 acre large-lot residential community is located north of Los Angeles Avenue (Hwy 118), west of the Las Posas Valley and east of the City of Ventura, and consists of six residential enclaves and a tennis club adjacent to the Saticoy Country Club golf course (see Figure 3.22 of the *Goals, Policies and Programs*). The residential parcels range from 0.46 acres to 13.22 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.82 acres. The residential zoning is RE-20,000 sq ft and RE-1ac., and the tennis club is zoned CPD.

~~**Somis** – This 96 acre mixed-use community is located in the center of the Las Posas Valley, north of the City of Camarillo, and consists of three separate areas containing residential, industrial and commercial land uses (see Figure 3.23 of the *Goals, Policies and Programs*). The residential parcels range from 0.10 acres to 2.41 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.23 acres. The zoning consists of R1-6,000 sq ft, R2, RE-10,000 sq ft., RE-1ac, RE-5ac, CO, C1 and M2.~~

Tapo Canyon – This seven acre large-lot residential community is located on the south side of Tapo Canyon Road, north of the City of Simi Valley (see Figure 3.25 of the *Goals, Policies and*

Programs). The residential parcels range from 0.33 acres to 1.10 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 1.06 acres. The zoning is RE-1ac.

Thousand Oaks Area - This 3,767 acre area is located within and adjacent to the City of Thousand Oaks (see Figure 1 of the *Thousand Oaks Area Plan*). This area has several distinct communities, which are described below.

Casa Conejo - This 227 acre urban residential community is located within the City of Thousand Oaks, south of Highway 101, north of Borchard Road and accessible via Wendy Drive. The residential parcels range from 0.16 acres to 1.10 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.19 acres. The parcels in this area are zoned R1-6,000 sq ft, R1-8,000 sq ft, RE-10,000 sq ft, and RPD-15 du/ac.

Kelly Estates – This 56 acre large-lot residential area is comprised of several enclaves located within the City of Thousand Oaks, north of the Upper Kelly Estates, near the intersection of West Lynn Road and La Cam Road. The residential parcels range from 0.25 acres to 3.31 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 1.07 acres. The zoning consists of RE-1 ac and OS-20 ac, with portions subject to the SRP (Scenic Resources Protection) overlay zone.

Lynn Ranch – This 539 acre large-lot residential area is located within the City of Thousand Oaks, north of Highway 101, and west of Lynn Road. The residential parcels range from 0.28 acres to 3.70 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.52 acres. The residential parcels consist of a mix of RO-20,000 sq ft and RE-10,000 sq ft zoning. The area also has an approximately 62 acre area zoned M1-10,000 sq ft (Rockwell International).

Rolling Oaks – This 149 acre large-lot, rural, residential enclave is surrounded by the City of Thousand Oaks located south of Highway 101 and accessible along South Rancho Road. The residential parcels range from 1.93 acres to 6.61 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 2.90 acres in area. The area is zoned RO-3 ac/SRP overlay zone.

Upper Kelly Estates – This 137 acre large-lot residential area is located just south of the City of Thousand Oaks and northeast of the White Stallion Ranch. The residential parcels in this area have a median parcel size of 5.00 acres. The area is zoned entirely OS-20 ac and subject to the SRP overlay zone.

Upper Ventu Park - This 257 acre area is located just south of Ventu Park, adjacent to the City of Thousand Oaks. The residential parcels range from 0.11 acres to 1.96 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.35 acres in area. The zoning consists of entirely OS-20 ac/SRP (Scenic Resources Protection).

Ventu Park – This 144 acre rustic residential area is located just south of the City of Thousand Oaks, north of the Upper Ventu Park Planning Area, and is accessible along S. Ventu Park Rd. The residential parcels range from 0.09 acres to 2.40 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.19 acres in area. The zoning consists of RE-10,000 sq ft and RA-1 ac with a portion subject to the SRP overlay zone.

Ventura Avenue Area – This 750 acre mixed-use area is located just north of the City of Ventura, east of the Ventura River, and south of the Casitas Springs Existing Community along Highway 33 (see *North Ventura Avenue Area Plan* and Figure 3.26 of the *Goals, Policies and Programs*). The area contains a significant number of petroleum-related industries zoned industrial M2-10,000 sq ft and M3-10,000 sq ft. The residential parcels, which are a mix of R1, RE, and RPD zoning, are located on the east side of the area and range from 0.08 acres to 11.11 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.14 acres. In addition, there are a few small commercial properties zoned C1 and CPD.

West Santa Paula – This six acre residential community is located within the western part of Santa Paula, and consists of three separate residential enclaves, one of which contains a small commercial parcel (see Figure 3.27 of the *Goals, Policies and Programs*). The residential parcels range from 0.09 acres to 0.37 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.19 acres. The residential zoning is R1-6,000 sq ft, and the commercial parcel is zoned CPD.

West Simi – This 141 acre residential large-lot community is located within the western portion of the City of Simi Valley and is comprised of two separate residential enclaves that are totally surrounded by the City (see Figure 3.28 of the *Goals, Policies and Programs*). The residential parcels range from 0.34 acres to 1.50 acres in area, with a median parcel size of 0.50 acres. The zoning is a mix of RE-13,000 sq ft, R1-20,000 sq ft, RE-1ac and RO-1ac.

4.22.2 Impacts

As the County develops and population increases, each new project has the potential to directly impact existing community character, either through its form, architecture, or use. However, the compatibility of proposed discretionary projects is reviewed by the Planning Division on a case-by-case basis to minimize these impacts.

In general, land use designations and zoning are consistent with existing community character of each of the unincorporated communities in Ventura County. The "Existing Community" designation is applied to unincorporated urban enclaves located outside cities and unincorporated urban centers. Many of the existing communities are located within a city's adopted Sphere of Influence, but have not yet been annexed. As such, the designation is not intended to allow all urban development, but rather to respect the existing urban context of the community. The applicable Existing Community Maps specifies the appropriate residential, commercial or industrial zones, population densities, and building intensities. Any zone change within an area covered by an Existing Community Map requires a General Plan amendment. Likewise, all Area Plans contain policies that ensure growth consistent with the existing character of the surrounding community.

To add an urban use that is out of character with the existing community or that would unduly impact the surrounding area, annexation to the neighboring city may be required. Thus, although the direct impact of individual discretionary projects is too speculative to be addressed at this time, there are policies in place that will protect community character and minimize impacts to a less-than-significant level (see section 4.22.3-Mitigation Measures).

Road widening projects have the potential to adversely impact community character. Five existing communities were identified as being potentially impacted by road widening that is planned under the proposed project. These five communities are listed below:

Casa Conejo – Widening Wendy Drive in the Casa Conejo unincorporated community from two lanes to four lanes has a potential impact to that community's character. Wendy Drive contains 80 feet of right-of-way, with 64 feet of pavement and 4 foot landscape parkway sidewalks and 4 foot sidewalks on both sides of the roadway. The land adjacent to Wendy Drive is zoned R1-8,000 sq ft (Single-Family Residential) and is completely developed with single-family residences that take driveway access directly from Wendy Drive.

According to the County Road Standards, Wendy Drive should have 94 feet of right of way in order to accommodate a standard four-lane Secondary Arterial roadway with a center median with left turn lanes at road intersections. Acquiring 14 additional feet of right-of-way would reduce the front yards of the adjacent residences by seven feet if the additional right-of way were acquired from both sides of the road. This would have a significant impact on the front yards and off-street parking in driveways on adjacent residences and is considered a significant impact on community character.

Casitas Springs – The widening of Highway 33 in the vicinity of Casitas Springs could adversely impact that community's character. Highway 33 as it passes through the community is currently two-lanes within 60 feet of right-of-way. Widening of the current roadway would have significant impacts on the character of Casitas Springs; therefore, the General Plan *Goals, Policies and Programs* and *Ojai Area Plan* currently call for re-routing Highway 33 to the west side of the community, along the east bank of the Ventura River.

Caltrans has been working for several years with the local Highway 33 Advisory Committee to develop a roadway design that would bypass the Casitas Springs community, avoid biological impacts in the Ventura River, accommodate the Ojai Valley Trail and function at an adequate

Level-of-Service (LOS). Caltrans' standard four lane highway requires four travel lanes, a center median, shoulder area for emergency parking, bicycles and pedestrians and slope and drainage areas. Although Caltrans has shown some willingness to minimize the four-lane highway design standards to reduce the right-of-way width, disagreement still exists over the need for four lanes, the exact route of the roadway and Ojai Valley Trail, and the intersections with local streets that would serve Casitas Springs.

Many residents of the Ojai Valley are opposed to widening Highway 33 to four lanes because of the development that could subsequently occur in the valley. Current General Plan policies prohibit discretionary development that would add traffic to the peak traffic periods on Highway 33 until there is a full funding commitment that would allow improvements to the road within a reasonable period of time. Some residents assert that if development is constrained so that there is no further increase in traffic, the Highway 33 bypass would not need to be widened to four lanes and could operate at LOS "E." In response to this assertion, VCTC commissioned a *Traffic Analysis and Alternative Evaluation Study* for the Casitas Springs Bypass (Associated Transportation Engineers, 2001), which confirmed that Highway 33 would need to be widened to four lanes in order to function above LOS "F" based on current traffic levels. Although widening the highway to four lanes would remove a current policy impediment to discretionary residential development (e.g., subdivision maps, multi-family residential, etc.), the development would be consistent with the *Ojai Area Plan*, which was amended in 1995 to reduce the potential development in the area as much as practical. Nonetheless, many residents are opposed to any further residential development in the Ojai area. Growth inducing impacts are discussed in section 4.24 of this EIR.

The Highway 33 bypass would isolate at least two existing businesses (a market and an antique store) and result in the loss of at least two residences. Nonetheless, the bypass would improve the overall community character and circulation within Casitas Springs, but could have a significant adverse impact on the character of Casitas Springs at the community's periphery.

Nyeland Acres - The widening of Santa Clara Avenue from two to four lanes between the City of Oxnard (Center Drive) and Highway 118 has the potential to impact the community character of Nyeland Acres, which lies immediately to the east.

Santa Clara Avenue is currently two-lanes within 60 feet of right-of-way. The land uses within the community adjacent to the roadway are exclusively single-family residential with RE-10 (Rural Exclusive, 10,000 sq ft min) zoning and have driveways that take direct access to Santa Clara Avenue. Widening Santa Clara Avenue to four lanes, even if all the additional right-of-way were acquired from the AE zoned property to the west, would increase traffic noise, make access onto the roadway difficult, and change the character of the roadway to a more suburban design.

An EIR was prepared for the widening of Santa Clara Avenue and Central Avenue, which was certified by the Board of Supervisors in October of 2001. The FEIR, relying on the information contained in the Initial Study, concluded that the project would not have a significant impact on community character of Nyeland Acres. However, based on public comments at the Board of Supervisors hearing regarding the project's impact on adjacent residential lots, the Board of Supervisors directed the Public Works Agency to prepare a bypass feasibility study, which was submitted to the Board in December of 2001 (see EIR section 4.22.3 below).

Santa Rosa Valley – The widening of Santa Rosa Road in the East Santa Rosa Valley from two lanes to four lanes has a potential impact to that community's character. Santa Rosa Road, as it passes through the community, is currently two lanes within 94 feet of right-of-way, with 51 to 75 feet of pavement. Zoning adjacent to the highway includes R1 (Single-Family Residential), RE (Rural Exclusive), RA (Rural Agricultural) and OS (Open Space), with minimum parcel sizes varying from 6,000 sq ft to 20 acres in area. Land uses adjacent to the highway are principally single-family residences, with some scattered agricultural greenhouses, farmland and animal husbandry. Most residences adjacent to Santa Rosa Road do not take access directly from Santa Rosa Road, but from side streets and private drives.

Additional right-of-way would not be generally required, except for a few graded slope areas. Santa Rosa Road would have to be reconstructed to provide a 14 foot center median with left hand turn lanes, four 12 foot travel lanes, 8 foot parking lanes (both sides), and 8 foot monolithic sidewalks (both sides). Per the County Road Standards, the sidewalks, curbs and gutters may be omitted by the PWA Road Commissioner. In addition, the center median would only have curbs at intersections. Elsewhere, the median would be simply paved and striped and would not be raised or landscaped, unless the community formed a financial mechanism to pay for added improvements and maintenance. In addition, the Public Road Standards would not include separate bikeways or bike paths or equestrian trails within the public right-of-way, unless the community formed a financial mechanism to pay for added improvements and maintenance.

Because community character is subjective, it is recognized that many residents believe that widening the roadway would adversely impact the character of the East Santa Rosa Community. In addition, many residents of the Santa Rosa Valley are opposed to widening Santa Rosa Road to four lanes due to the potential increase in traffic through the valley by commuters seeking an alternative route to Highways 101 and 118, which are currently operating below acceptable LOS standards. Some residents are also opposed to additional development within the valley that would add traffic to Santa Rosa Road.

Somis – The widening of Highway 34 from two to four lanes between the City of Camarillo and Highway 118, and the widening of Highway 118 in the vicinity of Bradley Road and North Street, have the potential to significantly impact the community of Somis.

Highway 34 as it passes through the community is currently two-lanes within 60 feet of right-of-way. Zoning adjacent to the highway includes C1 (Neighborhood Commercial), R2 (Two-Family Residential), RE-10,000 sq ft (Rural Exclusive), and RE-1ac. Land uses adjacent to the highway include several single-family residences, duplexes, commercial and public buildings, most of which front onto the roadway. Most residential and commercial uses south of North Street are served by an alley to the rear of the lots, but also rely on on-street parking.

Highway 118 in the vicinity of Bradley Road and North Street is currently two lanes within 60 feet of right-of-way. Most of the land uses in this area are agricultural or low intensity industrial and are zoned M2 (Limited Industrial). However, there are three residences on the south side of Highway 118; two that face on North Street and are zoned R2 (Two-Family Residential) and one residence located in proximity to Bradley Road that is zoned M2.

Widening Highways 34 and 118 using Caltrans design standards would require additional right-of-way, which would have to be purchased from the adjacent properties. The additional right-of-way could be from one side or a combination of both sides, which Caltrans would have to determine based on a number of physical and fiscal factors (e.g., existing structures, existing lot configurations).

Widening Highway 34 to Caltrans' standards for a four lane road could result in the elimination of front yards or entire lots and the potential elimination of several existing residential and commercial buildings. Given the number of commercial and residential uses and existing curbs, parkway and sidewalk on the west side of the roadway, the expansion would be more appropriate on the east side. The east side contains several residences, a welding shop, the Resource Conservation District office and a County fire station. Moreover, widening Highway 34 would physically divide residences on the east side of the highway from the rest of the community, and would also impede bicycle and pedestrian access across the highway.

Widening Highway 118 would not physically divide residential or commercial districts. Given the number and proximity of existing structures on the south side of the highway, the additional right-of-way would be more appropriately acquired from the north side. Preliminary analysis shows that only the existing retail portion of the Somis Nuthouse would be destroyed as a result of widening the highway. Therefore, the impact to the overall character of the community of Somis is not regarded as significant. Because community character is subjective, it is recognized that some residents may disagree with this conclusion.

4.22.3 Mitigation Measures

The *Goals, Policies and Programs* contains the following goals and policies that serve to protect the character of existing communities:

Goals:

1.7.1-2 Protect the visual resources within the *viewshed* of designated scenic highways, lakes and other scenic areas as may be identified by an area plan.

1.7.1-3 Enhance and maintain the visual appearance of buildings and *developments*.

3.1.1-3 Promote appropriate and orderly growth and *development* while protecting desirable existing land uses and a desired quality of life.

3.1.1-4 Ensure that land uses are appropriate and compatible with each other, and guide *development* in a pattern that will minimize land use conflicts between adjacent land uses.

3.2.1-2 Recognize and confine existing urban enclaves which are outside Urban designated areas, even though the enclaves may include uses, densities, and zoning designations normally limited to Urban designated areas.

Policies:

1.7.2-1 Notwithstanding Policies 1.7.2-2 and -3, *discretionary development* which would significantly degrade visual resources or significantly alter or obscure public views of visual resources shall be prohibited unless no feasible mitigation measures are available and the decision-making body determines there are overriding considerations.

1.7.2-2 *Scenic Resource Areas* as depicted on the Resource Protection Map (Figure 1), shall be governed by the provisions of the Scenic Resource Protection (SRP) Overlay Zone which include the following:

(1) Any request for significant grading shall be evaluated through the discretionary permit process.

(2) Removal, damaging or destruction of protected trees shall be in compliance with the County's "Tree Protection Regulations".

(3) No *discretionary development* shall be approved which would significantly degrade or destroy a scenic view or vista.

(4) No freestanding off-site advertising signs shall be permitted.

1.7.2-3 *Scenic Highway Areas* as depicted on the Resource Protection Map (Figure 1) shall be governed by the provisions of the Scenic Highway Protection (SHP) Overlay Zone which includes the following:

(1) All *development* shall require a Planned Development Permit.

(2) Removal, damaging or destruction of a protected tree shall be in compliance with the County's "Tree Protection Regulations".

(3) All new *development* shall be sited and designed to:

a. Minimize alteration of the natural topography and physical processes;

b. Prevent significant degradation of the scenic resource;

c. Minimize cut and fill operations, and area of disturbance;

d. Utilize native plants indigenous to the area whenever possible for revegetation;

e. Incorporate best feasible mitigation measures; and

f. Incorporate tree protection during construction.

(4) Off-site signs are prohibited in the SHP Overlay Zone.

3.1.2-2 …To determine the appropriate zone and subzone designation (from among those consistent with the appropriate land use designation), the following factors shall apply:

- Recognizing the desirability of retaining existing uses and densities on the subject land;
- Recognizing the desirability of accommodating anticipated uses on the subject land;
- Maintaining continuity with neighboring zoning, land uses and parcel sizes;
- Implementing the recommendations of any specific zoning and land use studies of the area in question;
- Recognizing and addressing the presence and significance of resources and hazards; and
- Evaluating the ability to provide public services and facilities.

3.3.2-6(2) The *goals,* objectives, and *policies* of the Area Plans and other adopted County plans and *policies* shall be considered at the time of permit application for housing *development,* especially with regard to the following:

- Consistency with adopted regional population forecasts.
- Balance of residential development with employment opportunities.
- Preservation and conservation of natural resources and agricultural lands.
- Recognition of environmental hazards and constraints.
- Preservation and promotion of community character.
- Availability of existing and planned infrastructure and urban services.

The *El Rio/Del Norte Area Plan* contains the following goals and policies that serve to protect the character of existing communities:

Goals:

3.1.1-1 Preserve the character of the El Rio/Del Norte area. The character of the El Rio/Del Norte area is defined by its small town, semi-rural qualities, consisting of several separate and distinct neighborhoods situated within the Oxnard agricultural plain, and comprising one community of common social and political interest.

3.1.1-4 Ensure that future discretionary development within the area is of high quality, consistent with the character of the community, and beneficial to the El Rio/Del Norte area as a whole.

3.1.1-5 Encourage the enhancement/upgrading of existing neighborhoods.

3.6.1-1 Ensure that existing and future Urban Residential land use patterns result in cohesive and consolidated neighborhoods which preserve the community character of the El Rio/Del Norte area.

Policies*:*

3.1.2-2 All discretionary development projects shall be reviewed and conditioned to ensure that they are … compatible with their surroundings, are of highest quality and best design feasible, are consistent with the character of the El Rio/Del Norte area, and are beneficial to the community as a whole.

3.6.2-1 New discretionary residential development shall be conditioned to be compatible with its surrounding land uses and to maintain the character of the El Rio/Del Norte area.

The *Lake Sherwood/Hidden Valley Area Plan* contains the following goals and policies that serve to protect the character of existing communities:

Goals:

1.1.1-1 Maintain, as much as practical, the existing residential and recreational character of the Lake Sherwood area.

1.1.1-7 Maintain the lands outside the Lake Sherwood community in "Open Space" as a means of retaining the existing pastoral character and limiting urbanization in areas which are unsuited to more intensive development due to the presence of physical hazards and development constraints, the necessity to protect natural resources, and the lack of public services and facilities required to support more intense land uses.

1.1.1-8 Encourage and maintain agricultural and horse ranch operations in order to preserve the farm/ranch based economy within the Hidden Valley area.

1.1.1-10 Limit development in the Carlisle Canyon area until adequate services and access are provided.

Policies:

1.1.2-4 Discretionary development shall be conditioned to incorporate good design standards including, open areas, landscaping, circulation, off-street parking, energy efficiency, architectural compatibility with the surroundings, etc.

1.1.2-5 Residential development shall be designed to provide a harmonious relationship between adjoining uses and the natural environment.

The *Oak Park Area Plan* contains the following goals and policies that serve to protect the character of existing communities:

Goals:

3.1.1-4 Provide for unified planning and a diversified urban community which reflects modern site design standards and concepts providing for the separation of incompatible uses.

3.1.1-7 Provide for flexibility in the design of the Oak Park Community.

3.1.1-9 Provide a focus for the community around which an identity can emerge.

3.1.1-10 Promote a lifestyle characterized by intimate and extensive experience with the natural environment, a rich and varied social context, and a strong sense of community.

3.3.1-3 Provide neighborhood configurations which encourage a variety of lifestyles, a focus and distinct identity.

Policies:

3.1.2-3 Discretionary development shall be conditioned to incorporate good design standards including open areas, landscaping, circulation, off-street parking, energy efficiency, architectural compatibility with surroundings, etc.

3.3.2-2 Discretionary residential development shall be conditioned to incorporate good design standards and maintain the character of the Oak Park Community. Design standards include open space, landscaping circulation, off-street parking, energy efficiency, architectural compatibility with the surroundings, etc.

The *Ojai Valley Area Plan* contains the following goals and policies that serve to protect the character of existing communities:

Goals:

3.1.1-1 Maintain the existing rural, small town character of the Ojai Valley.

3.1.1-3 Ensure that future discretionary development within the study area is of high quality, consistent with the character of the Ojai Valley, and beneficial to the community as a whole.

3.5.1-1 Ensure that existing and future Urban Residential land use patterns result in cohesive and consolidated neighborhoods.

3.6.1-2 Locate and design commercial land uses so as to minimize land use incompatibility with urban and rural residential, open space and agricultural land uses.

3.7.1-2 Provide for industrial uses that are sensitive to the environment and re-enforce the need to conserve local resources.

Policies:

3.1.2-3 All discretionary development projects shall be reviewed and conditioned to ensure that they are compatible with their surroundings, are of high quality and good design, are consistent with the character of the Ojai Valley, and are beneficial to the community as a whole.

3.5.2-2 New residential *discretionary development* shall be conditioned so as to be compatible with its surroundings and to maintain the character of the *Ojai Valley*.

3.6.2-2 *Discretionary development* in Commercial designated areas shall be subject to either a *Planned Development* or a *Conditional Use Permit* to assure compatibility with neighboring land uses. Such review shall give careful attention to landscaping, signage, access, site and building design and size, drainage, on-site parking and circulation, operating hours, fencing and mitigation of nuisance factors.

3.7.2-2 *Discretionary development* in Industrial designated areas shall be subject to either a *Planned Development* or *Conditional Use Permit* to assure compatibility with neighboring uses. Such review shall give careful attention to aesthetics, landscaping, signage, access, site and building design and size, drainage, on-site parking and circulation, operating hours, fencing and mitigation of nuisance factors.

The *Piru Area Plan* contains the following goals and policies that serve to protect the character of Piru:

Goals:

1.3.1-2 Protect certain important views which lend identity to Piru, or which have been historically enjoyed by the residents.

3.1.1-1 Maintain the existing early 1900's small town character of Piru.

3.1.1-3 Ensure that existing and future land use patterns result in a cohesive and consolidated community.

3.1.1-6. Encourage the revitalization and rehabilitation of substandard or deteriorated areas in the Piru Community.

3.1.1-7. Allow reduction of development, parking, landscaping, and sign standards in the Commercial Town Center, Railroad Property and "Hotel" areas (see Figure 5) to complement the Piru Community Design Guidelines (see Appendix).

Policies:

1.3.2-4 State Highway 126, Main Street, Center Street, Piru Canyon Road, Guiberson Road, and Torrey Road, are hereby designated as Local Scenic Roads (see Figure 2). Discretionary permits located within view of a Local Scenic Road shall be reviewed for compliance with the following criteria:

(a) A sign program shall be submitted concurrently with a discretionary permit for all commercial and industrial development. Freestanding off-site advertising signs shall be prohibited. All on-site freestanding signs shall be limited to five feet in height.

(b) Outside storage shall be landscaped and/or screened from public view.

(c) Existing healthy, mature trees shall be retained, where feasible.

(d) Discretionary development shall be designed consistent with the *Piru Community Design Guidelines* (see Appendix).

3.1.~~1~~-25 Social, physical and economic impacts shall be considered prior to the determination of the suitability and appropriateness of new development within the Piru Community.

3.1.~~1~~2-6 Discretionary development or redevelopment shall employ the Piru Community Design Guidelines (see Appendix) which are intended to complement and maintain the community's unique early 1900's small town identity.

The *Saticoy Area Plan* contains the following goals and policies that serve to protect the character of existing communities:

Goals:

3.1.1-2 Preserve the community identity of the area by matching development policies to the existing community characteristics, consistent with other community goals.

3.1.1-3 Provide for unified planning and a diversified urban community that reflects modern site design standards and concepts which provide for the separation of incompatible uses.

3.2.1-1 Preserve the existing Saticoy Community character and scale of development.

Policies:

3.1.2-2 *Discretionary development* shall be reviewed and conditioned to assure compatibility with adjacent land uses. Careful attention shall be focused on the provisions of open areas, landscaping, circulation, site and building design, drainage, on-site parking, and utilization of water conservation methods.

3.2.2-3 *Discretionary* residential *development* shall be reviewed and conditioned to assure compatibility with the character of the Saticoy Community. Careful attention shall be focused on the provision of open areas, landscaping, circulation, off-street parking, water conservation and architectural compatibility with the surroundings.

3.3.2-4 Commercial *development* shall be subject to either a Planned Development of Conditional Use Permit to assure compatibility with adjacent land uses. Such review shall give careful attention to landscaping, signage, access, site and building design, drainage, on-site parking and circulation, fencing and mitigation of nuisance factors.

3.4.2-2 Industrial *development* shall be subject to either a Planned Development or Conditional Use Permit to assure compatibility with adjacent land uses. Such review shall give careful attention to landscaping, signage, access, site and building design, drainage, on-site parking and circulation, fencing and mitigation of nuisance factors.

The *Thousand Oaks Area Plan* contains the following goals and policies that serve to protect the character of existing communities:

Goals:

3.1.1-3 Strive to maintain the existing semi-rural residential character of the Thousand Oaks area.

3.1.1-4. Preserve the major resources of the area by adapting development patterns to the natural environment.

3.3.1-2 Produce neighborhood configurations which preserve the natural features of the site and minimize the requirement for grading.

3.3.1-4 Ensure that existing and future land use patterns result in cohesive and consolidated neighborhoods.

Policies:

3.1.2-2 New discretionary development shall be designed and constructed in conformance with the Grading and Hillside Development Standards (Section 5.3).

The Highway 33 bypass and the widening of Highway 34, Santa Rosa Road, and Wendy Drive have the potential to adversely impact the character of four existing communities (i.e., Casa Conejo, Casitas Springs, Nyeland Acres, ~~Somis, East~~ Santa Rosa Valley, Somis~~Casa Conejo~~). To mitigate these potentially significant impacts, the design of the roads could be modified to better reflect the character of the area and still allow the roads to operate at an acceptable LOS.

Casa Conejo – The community character impacts of widening Wendy Drive can be mitigated by adopting design changes to the road cross-section. By eliminating the center median, the road right-of-way does not have to be increased and the four travel lanes would be accommodated by re-striping the roadway. This change would eliminate the separate left-hand turn lanes or on-street parking at road intersections, but neither of these changes is regarded as a significant impact on community character.

Casitas Springs - The community character impacts of the Highway 33 bypass can be mitigated by adopting design changes to the road cross-section, alignment, and intersections. These mitigation measures are feasible and are the responsibility of Caltrans.

Nyeland Acres – Per the Board of Supervisor's direction, the County Public Works Agency commissioned the *Santa Clara Avenue Bypass Feasibility Study* (Washington Infrastructure Services, 2001). The study evaluated the roadway design alternatives that would make existing Clara Avenue a frontage road adjacent to Nyeland Acres, acquire up to 213 feet of additional right-of-way from the west side, construct a new four-lane thoroughfare, and constructing a masonry block sound wall on the east side. The estimated cost of the Bypass was estimated at $6.8 million. In December of 2001, the Board of Supervisors conceptually approved a frontage road and sound wall as part of the long-term widening plans for Santa Clara Avenue and directed that the PWA explore potential funding and a Supplemental EIR for these design changes.

Santa Rosa Valley – The community character impacts of Santa Rosa Road can be mitigated by adopting design changes to the road cross-section. The center median could be landscaped with vegetation similar to that found in the Santa Rosa Valley and could be made wider; on-street parking lanes could be converted to painted bike lanes with emergency vehicle parking only; and the area outside of the paved roadway could be left unimproved or improved with pedestrian/equestrian paths (no concrete or asphalt). These changes would be more in character with the surrounding rural residential estate community.

Somis – Widening Highway 34 through the community of Somis to four lanes would have a significant adverse impact on the community character because of the acquisition of additional road right-of-way and construction of travel lanes, on-street parking, curbs and gutters, and sidewalks would physically alter front yard areas and result in the demolition of several existing residential and commercial buildings. Although the design specifications for this State highway could be reduced (e.g., eliminate center median, eliminate on-street parking) the standards cannot be reduced to a point where no additional right-of-way would be required. Therefore, the impact on community character is significant and unmitigated (see section 5.4 – Highway 34 Bypass).

4.22.4 Residual Impact

The impact of future discretionary development on community character is potentially significant, but can be mitigated to a less-than-significant level by adherence to existing General Plan policies.

Although the Highway 33 bypass and widening of Highway 34, Santa Rosa Road, and Wendy Drive have the potential to adversely impact the character of four existing communities (i.e., Casa Conejo, Casitas Springs, Nyeland Acres~~Somis,~~ Santa Rosa Valley, Somis~~Casa Conejo~~), the design of the roads could be modified to better reflect the character of the area and still allow the roads to operate at

an acceptable LOS. The residual impacts on community character with these design changes are as follows:

County design modifications to re-stripe Wendy Drive would reduce the impact on community character to a less-than-significant level. Nonetheless, because community character is subjective, it is recognized that some residents may disagree with this conclusion.

Caltrans design changes to the road cross-section, alignment, and intersections of the Highway 33 bypass would reduce the impact on Casitas Springs to a less-than-significant level. Nonetheless, because community character is subjective, it is recognized that some residents may disagree with this conclusion.

County design modifications to Santa Clara Avenue adjacent to the community of Nyeland Acres would reduce traffic and noise impacts on adjacent residential properties. Nonetheless, because community character is subjective, it is recognized that some residents may disagree with this conclusion.

County design modifications to Santa Rosa Road to maintain and enhance the rural character of the east Santa Rosa Valley are feasible and would reduce the impact on community character to a less than significant level. Nonetheless, because community character is subjective, it is recognized that some residents may disagree with this conclusion.

Caltrans design changes to Highway 34 cannot eliminate the acquisition of additional right-of-way and the demolition of several buildings; therefore, the impact on community character remains significant (see section 5.4 – Highway 34 Bypass).

4.23 Housing

The Ventura County *Initial Study Assessment Guidelines* define the criteria and methodology for determining whether a proposed project may have a significant adverse impact on housing. Any project that would remove existing housing would have an impact unless it is owner-occupied and the property owner elects to remove the house. It is considered a significant, adverse impact when the forced removal of four or more dwellings that are currently or were formerly owner-occupied, or the removal of four or more dwellings that are currently or were formerly renter-occupied occurs and these units were affordable to moderate income families in the coastal zone or to lower-income families located anywhere in the county.

Projects that create a potential demand for housing, such as a project that employs more than 30 full-time employees (excluding construction workers), are regarded as potentially significant unless 32% or more of the area's total housing is affordable to lower-income families and the current housing vacancy rate is three percent or greater.

4.23.1 Environmental Setting

Proposed Figure 3.3.1 of the *Land Use Appendix* has been updated to reflect both 2000 Federal Census population data and population forecasts adopted in May 2001 by the Ventura Council of Government (VCOG). The forecast methodology is described in Appendix 8.8.

A steady increase in population is projected to result in a countywide total population of 915,000 by the year 2020. Between 2000 and 2020, the population in unincorporated areas is predicted to grow by 29,057 people. Proposed Figure 3.3.2 of the *Land Use Appendix* reflects the 2000 Federal Census dwelling unit counts and county dwelling unit estimates prepared by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). Using the methodology developed by SCAG in 1998, there is a projected need for 60,964 dwelling units countywide and for 11,041 units in the unincorporated area between 2000 and 2020. By 2020, proposed Figure 3.3.3 of the *Land Use Appendix* reveals that the number of people per dwelling unit will be 2.93.

Proposed Figure 3.4.1 of the *Land Use Appendix* illustrates the employment forecasts for the various jurisdictions during the 2000-2020 timeframe. These are based on the VCOG employment projections. Job growth from 2000 to 2020 countywide is projected to increase from 321,847 to 424,029. In the unincorporated areas it is projected to increase from 39,042 jobs to 44,344 jobs.

SCAG recognizes that job driven growth and demographic changes have an impact on housing supply in a region. For this reason the jobs/housing balance is another measure used to determine overall demand for housing. "Jobs" are defined as the number of employees by place of work (as opposed to the number of workers identified by place of residence). The jobs/housing ratio is calculated by dividing the number of jobs by the number of houses. It is an indication of the local balance between local work opportunities and local housing availability. According to SCAG, the "balanced" ratio between jobs and housing is between 1.24 and 1.52 jobs/housing unit. Using this assumption, ratios lower than 1.24 represent an excess of housing ("housing rich/jobs poor"), and ratios higher than 1.52 represent an excess of jobs ("jobs rich/housing poor").

The County's Employment/Housing Forecast has been updated in proposed Figure 3.4.2 of the *Land Use Appendix* to reflect VCOG projections to 2020. In 2000, the countywide ratio was 1.28. The 2020 forecast contained in proposed Figure 3.4.2 of the *Land Use Appendix* shows an increase in this ratio to 1.36. (Incremental changes in the employment/housing balance for each of the jurisdictions are depicted in Figure 3.4.3.). Although this ratio is within the "balanced" range, it should be kept in mind that according to the 2000 Federal Census, 20% of the County work force commuted to jobs in Los Angeles County and 3% to jobs in Santa Barbara County. If this proportion of L.A. and Santa Barbara County jobs were to be added to in-County jobs, the ratios would increase and the County would be defined as housing poor.

It should also be noted that although the countywide ratio falls within acceptable limits, there are clear disparities between jurisdictions within the county. In general, communities located on the east side of the county are weighted toward the provision of jobs while those located on the west side are more

heavily weighted toward the provision of housing. To date, no local jurisdiction within the County has adopted an explicit policy to ensure a balance between employment and housing. Rather, many jurisdictions have adopted growth management ordinances to limit the housing supply or have passed SOAR (Save Our Open Space and Agricultural Resources) initiatives to limit the supply of land available for urban development.

4.23.2 Impacts

Given the population and dwelling unit forecasts shown in proposed Figures 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 of the *Land Use Appendix*, the projected increases in population will likely result in increased construction of residential dwelling units countywide. The number of actual units constructed will be a function of the available supply of land, environmental restrictions, pressure to preserve agricultural land, and development potential in individual jurisdictions.

The proposed County General Plan Update would have no direct impact on the existing housing stock. No existing residential areas are being proposed for expanded land uses and no new zone changes to residential are proposed. Additionally, few dwelling units would be removed due to public improvement projects, such as for road construction. (To review potential indirect impacts on existing housing, such as impacts from traffic or noise, refer to the specific applicable environmental impact sections.)

Nonetheless, the proposed County General Plan Update, in conjunction with the cities' individual General Plans, will affect local demand and supply of housing in the future. Under the County General Plan and the *Guidelines for Orderly Development*, future urban development would primarily occur within or adjacent to existing identified urban centers. Each city would, in turn, control the location, timing, and amount of industrial, commercial, and residential development within their jurisdiction. This will affect both the local and regional demand and the supply of housing. As stated above, no local jurisdiction (including the County) has adopted explicit measures to ensure a balance between employment and housing. On the other hand, most cities have adopted SOAR initiatives or growth management ordinances that limit the land available for urban development and housing construction. Therefore, there is the possibility that local housing demand (created by industrial and commercial development) will exceed housing supply.

The *Land Use Appendix* of the County General Plan assesses future housing needs and demand. The Land Use Chapter of the *Goals, Policies, and Programs* includes implementation measures to meet housing needs for families of all income levels, with an emphasis on low- and moderate-income households. These measures would carry out the programs contained in the 2001 Housing Element and would serve to create more residential units to meet projected demands between 1998 and 2005.

Within the County, the balance between jobs and housing as defined by SCAG is expected to remain consistent into the future. The population, dwelling unit, and employment forecasts approved by VCOG do not anticipate future housing shortages. The overall countywide jobs/housing ratio is projected to remain relatively constant, increasing from 1.28 in 2000 to 1.36 in 2020.

As stated above, external factors outside the control of the County could affect this balance. Twenty-four percent of the county work force commuted to jobs outside of Ventura County in 2000, according to the 2000 Federal Census. In terms of relative demand for housing, workers in Ventura County may be competing with workers from Los Angeles County for housing on the east side of the county and with workers from Santa Barbara County on the west side of the county. This competition will have a significant effect on future housing availability and cost within the County.

In order to meet the housing needs generated by the greater Southern California region, the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) process was established by SCAG to assign housing growth numbers that represent each jurisdiction's responsibility for meeting that need. Existing General Plan Goals, Policies, and Programs contained in Section 3.3 (see in particular Goal 3.3.5.1) would implement the targets established for the County by the RHNA process.

4.23.3 Mitigation Measures

Based on the above analysis, the direct impact of future discretionary development on housing is potentially significant, but must be reviewed on a case-by-case basis in the future.

When implemented, numerous programs detailed in section 3.3.3 of the General Plan *Goals, Policies, and Programs* will preserve and rehabilitate existing affordable housing and provide opportunities for a diversity of new housing. Specifically, the General Plan *Goals, Policies and Programs* contain the following housing preservation policy:

3.3.2-2 Housing Preservation Policies:

(1) Existing residentially developed neighborhoods shall not be designated under Area Plans to land uses that would eliminate or degrade the existing housing stock.

(2) *Lower-* and *moderate-income* rental housing located in the Coastal Zone shall be concurrently replaced within three miles, if feasible, when two or more such units are converted or demolished.

(3) The County shall support the efforts of private and public agencies to preserve the existing housing stock.

There is the potential for cumulative local housing demand to exceed supply when individual cities within the County fail to maintain an adequate jobs/housing balance. To address this impact, the General Plan *Goals, Policies and Programs* contain the following policies:

3.3.2-4(1) As Area Plans are developed or updated, they shall attempt to accomplish the following to encourage greater housing opportunities:

- Increase density, where appropriate, to reduce the cost of land per unit.
- Ensure a mix of residential densities (i.e., multi-family as well as single-family densities).
- Re-designate, where appropriate, any commercial, industrial or public land which has been determined to be surplus for the community needs, to a residential land use designation in order to increase the land available for housing.
- Discourage the conversion of existing residentially developed or designated areas to other land uses.
- Ensure that there is enough residential land to meet planned employment opportunities and that there is a balanced amount of commercial, industrial and residential land use designations.

3.4.2-8 As Area Plans are prepared or updated, or applications for employment-generating developments of 30 or more full-time employees are received, planned industrial and commercial areas/developments shall be evaluated to assess the impact on jobs/housing balance within the community and region.

4.23.4 Residual Impact

Projected countywide population growth will have a potentially significant impact on housing resources. The direct impact of individual discretionary projects is too speculative to be addressed at this time. However, it is assumed that indirect and cumulative impacts to housing resources will remain significant.

4.24 Growth Inducement

Section 15126.2(d) of the State CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR discuss the growth-inducing impacts of the project. The Guidelines defines growth inducement as the way in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Growth inducement is further defined in the Ventura County *Initial Study Assessment Guidelines* as any action that would eliminate or remove an impediment to growth in an area. This includes both physical impediments (e.g., lack of sewers, constraints on water supply) and policy impediments (e.g., general plan policies, zoning ordinance regulations).

The County General Plan, in concert with the Coastal and Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinances, specifies where and what general types of land uses can be built within the unincorporated area of the county. The impact of this growth is the subject of the preceding sections of this EIR. This section specifically discusses the growth inducing impacts of the proposed changes to the policies of the County General Plan.

Updating the population, dwelling unit and employment forecasts is simply predicting what is expected to occur in the future under the land use plans of the existing County and city general plans. The update, therefore, is not growth inducing because it is not, itself, fostering additional economic or population growth, and is not removing a physical or policy impediment to growth. However, it has been determined that the following components (policy changes) of this focused General Plan update could have growth inducement impacts:

1. Allowing for the creation of substandard sized parcels for farmworker housing complexes in Agricultural and Open Space designations and the A-E and O-S zones.
2. Allowing for the increase in building coverage for crop and orchard-related uses and farmworker housing complexes in the Open Space and Agricultural designations.
3. Allowing community sewage treatment facilities, and uses that require said facilities, in Rural, Open Space and Agricultural designated areas in order to protect groundwater quality.
4. Creating the Lewis Road Existing Community designation and rezoning the area to RPD (Residential Planned Development, 30 dwelling units maximum) would allow for a potential increase in the number of residents in that area.
5. The planned widening of roads of the Regional Road Network.
6. Allowing the approval of affordable housing projects, additional dwellings on Cultural Heritage Sites, and agriculturally-related uses even though the roads that would be serving the project are, or would be, operating at a Level of Service (LOS) lower than that prescribed by the General Plan.

Under the CEQA Guidelines, there is no requirement that growth-inducing impacts be characterized as either significant or less-than-significant. Nonetheless, according to the County *Initial Study Assessment Guidelines*, the significance of the growth inducing impacts of a project should be determined on a case-by-case basis and depend on:

- How much added growth/development would be accommodated by removing the impediment and setting a precedent for similar actions in the future;
- Whether that growth is consistent with the planned land use of an area; and
- The physical impacts of said growth (secondary impacts).

4.24.1 Environmental Setting

Development within the cities and unincorporated area of Ventura County is allowed and regulated under the general plans and zoning ordinances of the individual cities and the County of Ventura. Under the State Government Code, general plans can be amended up to four times per year and

zoning ordinances can be amended as needed. However, eight of the ten cities have enacted voter-initiated SOAR (Save Open-space and Agricultural Resources) ordinances/initiatives that prohibit urban development outside of City Urban Restriction Boundary (CURB) lines unless approved by the city electorate. In addition, a countywide voter-initiated SOAR ordinance was enacted in 1998, which generally prohibits land use designation changes or amendments to the policies of the Agricultural, Open Space and Rural land use designations of the County General Plan unless approved by the countywide electorate. All of these SOAR ordinances/initiatives are operative at least through the year 2020. Therefore, the SOAR ordinances/initiatives serve to limit potential urban development within the county to fixed geographical areas (with most urban development within the ten cities) and serve as a major constraint to change through the year 2020.

To better understand the existing environment as it relates to the components of the focused General Plan update listed above, the following background information is provided:

Parcel Size Exceptions for Farmworker Housing Complexes

Farmworkers are an essential component of the agricultural industry in Ventura County, and it is estimated that there are between 16,000 and 27,000 full and part-time farmworkers residing within the county. Although most farmworkers live in conventional housing within the cities and unincorporated urban areas that are near the agricultural areas of the county, some farmworkers live in farmworker camps (licensed by the State) or multi-family farmworker housing projects. In the year 2000, there were 17 State-licensed farmworker camps serving approximately 728 farmworkers and their families, and two multi-family farmworker housing projects containing 174 dwelling units.

In 2001, the Board of Supervisors adopted an update to the housing element of the County General Plan, which identified farmworkers as a special needs group requiring special assistance in acquiring decent, safe and affordable housing. In response, the Board of Supervisors directed the preparation of a farmworker housing study, which was completed in 2002. This study evaluated the existing and future housing needs for farmworkers, identified potential sites for "farmworker housing complexes", and proposed amendments to the Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance and General Plan to more easily accommodate farmworker housing.

Farmworker housing complexes (farmworker camps and multi-family farmworker housing projects) are allowed "by right" in the AE (Agricultural Exclusive) and OS (Open Space) zones, subject to discretionary site plan review. The minimum parcel size for new subdivisions of Agriculturally designated/AE zoned land is 40 acres and Open Space designated/OS zoned land is 10 acres. The *Farmworker Housing Study* concluded that the ideal size for a farmworker housing complex is between 2 and 20 acres, and further identified over 200 such parcels that would meet specific development and location criteria. Most of these parcels are located within or adjacent to city Spheres of Influence (ultimate city limits as determined by LAFCO) and are zoned AE. However, not all city Spheres had a sufficient number of existing, appropriately sized parcels. Therefore, the *Farmworker Housing Study* recommended that the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance be amended to allow for the creation of sub-standard sized parcels within or adjacent to a city Sphere or adjacent to unincorporated land designated Urban or Existing Community under the County General Plan.

Since 2002, the Agriculture Futures Alliance (AFA) has contacted each of the owners of the 200 parcels identified in the *Farmworker Housing Study* to determine if they would be willing to sell or enter into a partnership to develop their property for farmworker housing. Although a few of these property owners have expressed an interest, most have not. However, several property owners with parcels over 20 acres in area have expressed an interest in subdividing and selling or leasing a portion of their property for farmworker housing.

Building Coverage Exceptions for Crop or Orchard Related Uses and Farmworker Housing Complexes

Crop and orchard related uses (e.g., packing, storage & preliminary processing facilities; wineries, accessory structures, agricultural sales, agricultural promotional uses) and farmworker housing complexes are regarded as essential or important components of the agricultural industry in Ventura County. According to the Assessor's Office records, there are five parcels containing "packinghouses"

that are zoned AE or OS in the unincorporated area of the County. The size of these parcels range from approximately one acre to 37 acres in area.

Per policy 3.1.2-5 of the *Goals, Policies and Programs*, the maximum building coverage on parcels designated Agricultural and Open Space is five percent, with a sliding scale of between five and 50 percent for parcels that are smaller than 10 acres in area. The purpose of this building coverage standard is to maintain the open, undeveloped nature of Agricultural and Open Space designated land and to limit the permanent loss of agricultural soils. Although greenhouses, hot houses and agricultural shade/mist structures are regarded as temporary structures and are exempt from these standards, the building coverage limitations significantly restrict the ability to expand existing, or to construct new, more permanent crop or orchard related facilities and farmworker housing complexes. In the past year, two packinghouses (Driscoll Strawberry & Mission Produce) were granted variances to the building coverage standards so that they could expand their existing facilities. Also, the Rancho Sespe farmworker housing project near Piru is now non-conforming because it exceeds the current building coverage standards of the Agricultural designation.

The Agricultural Commissioner's Office recommended that an exception be provided for crop and orchard related facilities. The *Farmworker Housing Study* recommended that an exception to the building coverage standards be made for farmworker housing complexes.

Community Sewage Treatment Facilities in Non-Urban Areas

Per General Plan policy 3.1.2-11, discretionary development must be consistent with the *Guidelines for Orderly Development*. These Guidelines, which have been in existence since 1969, maintain the consistent theme that urban development should be located within incorporated cities, whenever and wherever practical.

In 1996, the *Guidelines for Orderly Development* was amended by the cities, County and LAFCO to clarify the policies and define some of the important terms. Under the policies of the Guidelines, urban development is only permitted in cities and unincorporated areas designated Urban or Existing Community by the County General Plan. Furthermore, "urban development" is defined, in part, to include any "development that requires the establishment of new community sewer systems or the significant expansion of existing community sewer systems."

The County General Plan defines "community sewage treatment facilities" as plants that treat liquid waste that is received from off of the plant site. Although the Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance conditionally permits community sewage treatment facilities in the AE, OS, RA and RE zones, the decision-making body must find that the use is consistent with the policies of the General Plan, including policy 3.1.2-11. Since sewer trunk lines are below ground, they are not subject to the County Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance and policy 3.1.2-11 isn't directly applicable. However, parcel maps and tract maps are discretionary entitlements that require findings of consistency with the policies of the General Plan. Although it could be narrowly argued that new or significant expansion of existing community sewer systems are not specifically prohibited by the *Guidelines for Orderly Development*, subdivision maps that require new or significant expansion of existing community sewer systems are clearly not permitted on land designated Agricultural, Open Space or Rural.

Subsequent to the amendment to the *Guidelines for Orderly Development*, the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Board (RWQCB) has taken a series of actions to prevent degradation of groundwater quality. For example, in 2000 the RWQCB banned the use of septic systems in the Del Norte area of the County (El Rio, Nyeland Acres, Saticoy, Strickland Acres) because the groundwater contains high levels of nitrates, and has further ordered that existing development connect to sewers by 2008. Other areas of the County are experiencing similar groundwater quality problems (e.g., Santa Rosa Valley), which may require the establishment of new or significant expansion of existing community sewer systems.

The Board of Supervisors, in anticipation of the potential need to establish and expand community sewer systems in areas with poor groundwater quality, has directed that policy 3.1.2-11 be considered for amendment to allow an exemption to the *Guidelines for Orderly Development* on a case-by-case basis in order to protect or improve groundwater quality.

Currently, there are three community sewage treatment facilities located in the unincorporated area that are on land designated Agricultural, Open Space or Rural:

- Moorpark Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Piru (Waterworks District No. 16) Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Limoneira Wastewater Treatment Plant

Establishment of Lewis Road Existing Community

The County of Ventura owns 57.65 acres of land located on the east side of Lewis Road in the vicinity of Cawelti Road, southerly of the City of Camarillo and northerly of the CSUCI campus. Approximately 44 acres of the subject property is being leased to two non-profit organizations (Casa Pacifica and Area Housing Authority) and contains residential care/service facilities. The balance of the property is currently being utilized for a homeless transitional living facility (RAIN).

Prior to 1998, the subject property was owned by the State of California. As such, the property was, and remains, designated State or Federal Facility on the General Plan *Goals, Policies and Programs'* Land Use Map and is zoned OS-160 ac.

In 1991, a 40 acre portion of the property was leased to the County of Ventura, which in turn was subleased ~~them~~ to non-profit organizations for the purpose of providing residential care facilities to serve special needs groups (i.e., children, mentally ill). The County permitted the subject uses and facilities under two Conditional Use Permits (CUPs 4736 & 4737), under the broad category of Governmental Buildings. In 1998, the entire property was declared surplus by the State and was sold to the County for "public purpose." A more specific breakdown of the current permitted/actual uses is as follows:

Lessee (Facility Name)	Type of Care Facility (clients)	Lease Area	Permitted (Actual) Residents/Clients & Staff
Casa Pacifica	Residential & day care (children)	22 Acres	115 (98) children
Area Housing Authority (Las Posada & Villa Calleguas)	Residential Group Home and Individual Units (mentally ill)	20 Acres	54 persons
RAIN	Transitional Living Group Home (homeless)	15.65 Acres	90 (45) persons

Since the County now owns the property, the State or Federal Facility land use designation and OS-160 ac zoning are no longer appropriate. Therefore, to recognize the existing and proposed uses of this property, the property should be re-designated to Existing Community and rezoned to RPD (Residential Planned Development, 30 du/ac).

Regional Road Network Improvements

It is generally recognized that there is a significant correlation between land uses and transportation. As an area develops and population increases, there is an increased need to widen existing and construct new roads and highways, as well as expand other modes of transportation (e.g., buses, rail). Conversely, urban/suburban development tends to locate along or near available transportation corridors and centers.

Both the State of California and the County of Ventura have enacted policies that require the correlation between land use planning and transportation planning. The State Government Code

requires that the circulation and housing elements of city and county general plans be "correlated" and "consistent" with one another. In addition, the State mandates Congestion Management Plans that require regional transportation planning agencies and local governments to take actions necessary to ensure that roads will function at an adequate level of service. Therefore, local governments, along with transportation planning agencies, must plan the roads and highways within their jurisdiction in a manner that will adequately serve the planned land uses, taking into account the growth in regional traffic as well.

The existing Regional Road Network within Ventura County is described in section 4.14 of this EIR.

Traffic Policy Exceptions for Affordable Housing Projects, Cultural Heritage Sites and Agricultural-Related Uses

To ensure that the land use and transportation/circulation chapters of the General Plan remain correlated and consistent per the requirements of State law, the Board of Supervisors established policy 4.2.2-5 of the *Goals, Policies and Programs*. That policy states that discretionary development shall be denied if the project would cause a road to fall below its acceptable Level of Service (LOS) or add traffic to a road that currently has an unacceptable LOS, unless the decision-making body finds that there is a full funding commitment to improve the subject road(s) and that the improvements will occur within a reasonable period of time.

As discussed in section 4.14 of this EIR, there are several roads that are, or may be, currently operating below the prescribed LOS standard, and there aren't sufficient funds to make road improvements in a reasonable period of time to bring these roads up to an acceptable LOS (e.g., Highways 33 and 118). Therefore, discretionary permits that would add traffic to these roads are not currently being approved in areas where the roads are currently operating at below the adopted LOS standard.

The Board of Supervisors has directed that traffic policy 4.2.2-5 be amended to allow exceptions for the following land uses:

- Farmworker Housing Complexes, Affordable Housing development per Article 16 of the Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance, and other housing exclusively for *lower-income* households.
- Additional dwellings and lots on Cultural Heritage Sites as permitted in the Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance.
- Agriculture and Agricultural Operations as permitted in the Coastal and Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinances.

The exception for farmworker housing complexes and other affordable housing is justified because of the need identified in the County General Plan housing element and because State law regarding Congestion Management Plans makes exceptions for affordable housing.

The exception for Cultural Heritage Sites is justified because there is a need to provide incentives to preserve such sites.

The exception for agricultural uses is justified because of the need to support the agricultural industry. However, it should be pointed out the uses listed under "Agriculture and Agricultural Operations" in the Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance is broader than "Crop and Orchard Production" (see building coverage exceptions above), and also includes animal husbandry and agricultural contractor's service and storage yards.

According to the Assessor's Office records, in the unincorporated area there are 74 parcels containing "livestock operations" and 18 parcels containing "animal specialties" (egg production, poultry, etc.)" and three parcels containing "agricultural related activities" (e.g., farm equipment cover and fuel storage, pump house). The vast majority of these uses are located in the unincorporated area of the county.

4.24.2 Impacts

Parcels Size Exceptions For Farmworker Housing Complexes

This component will have a growth inducing impact because its purpose is to promote the construction of farmworker housing complexes. However, it is not known how many exceptions are likely to be granted and farmworker housing complexes are likely to be constructed in the future.

Assuming that it is unlikely that a property owner of AE zoned land would apply for a parcel of less than five acres for a farmworker housing complex and the residual parcel must be 40 acres in area, a parent parcel of 45 acres or more would be necessary. According to the Assessor's Office records, there are approximately 210 AE-zoned parcels of 45 acres or more within or adjacent to a city Sphere of Influence or adjacent to land designated Urban or Existing Community. It is highly unlikely that a substantial number of property owners would apply for this exception, but the growth inducing impact is regarded as potentially significant.

The significant impacts associated with developing farmworker housing complexes on Agricultural-designated land are the loss of agricultural soils and potential land use conflicts (e.g., pesticides and herbicides, agricultural practices, vandalism, trespass). Other impacts may be significant as well, but would have to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Building Coverage Exceptions for Crop or Orchard Related Uses and Farmworker Housing Complexes

As stated in the section 4.24.1 above, there are five parcels containing "packinghouses" that are zoned AE or OS in the unincorporated area of the County. The size of these parcels range from approximately two acres to 37 acres in area. Under the proposed exception, these facilities could expand to a degree that would not be allowed under the existing policy, but this impact is not regarded as significant. However, new crop or orchard related uses could be established in AE and OS zoned areas.

According to the Assessor's Office records, there are approximately 30 parcels containing "packinghouses" that are located in the cities or on unincorporated land designated Rural, Existing Community or Urban. The size of these parcels range from approximately one acre to 30 acres in area. With the proposed exception, the owners may find that it may be physically and financially feasible to relocate and expand their facilities onto unincorporated land zoned AE or OS. Although the cost of constructing new buildings can be substantial, AE and OS zoned unincorporated land is substantially less expensive than industrially zoned land within cities or unincorporated Rural, Existing Community or Urban designated areas.

In addition to the potential for relocation of existing crop or orchard related facilities, there is the need and potential to accommodate new facilities that would be required as crop types change. In recent years, the number of acres and overall production from citrus orchards has declined and the number of acres and production from specialty crops (e.g., strawberries, nursery stock, ornamentals) has increased. As an example, within the last two years the last the last Valencia Orange packinghouse in Ventura County closed. As a result, Valencia Orange growers were forced to either ship their produce to packinghouses in the Central Valley of California or remove the old orchards and replant with other crops or orchards. Although it might be feasible to convert some existing orchard packing, storage and processing facilities to accommodate other types of crops, some facility conversions may not be feasible because of the different needs of different crops. The proposed exemption amendment would remove an existing constraint and allow new crop and orchard packing, storage and preliminary processing facilities to locate on AE and OS zoned parcels. If this exemption is not approved, new packing, storage and preliminary processing facilities may have to look for sites in the industrial zoned areas of the cities and unincorporated Existing Community and Urban designated areas. As such, these new facilities may not be financially feasible because of the higher cost of industrial-zoned land.

The impact of developing new, or relocating existing, crop or orchard related facilities to the unincorporated area of the county could be significant. Developing or relocating packing, storage or preliminary processing plants in closer proximity to the crops or orchards may reduce the vehicle miles

needed to initially transport the produce, but the vehicle miles traveled by employees are likely to increase since most of them would reside in the existing cities. In addition, developing new, or relocating existing, crop or orchard related uses to the AE zoned unincorporated area could result in a cumulatively significant loss of agricultural soils.

The growth inducing impacts of this proposed exception as it relates to farmworker housing complexes is discussed in the preceding section and is also potentially significant.

Uses Requiring Community Sewage Treatment Facilities in Non-Urban Areas

The location of future community sewage treatment facilities is not known at this time. However, it is speculated that such facilities may be required or recommended by the Regional Water Quality Control Board in the Santa Rosa Valley, in the Las Posas Valley in proximity to the Fox Canyon recharge area, and in other areas where septic systems are not feasible due to the geological conditions (e.g., Santa Monica Mountains).

The construction of new, or significant expansion of existing community sewage treatment facilities is generally regarded as significantly growth inducing. This is because such facilities are very expensive to build and operate, which creates financial pressure to add more customers to defray the cost. As a general rule, the per-customer cost of a large sewage treatment facility that serves many customers is less than a small facility that serves few customers.

In areas that are designated Agricultural, Open Space or Rural the pressure for future General Plan amendments to more intense land use due to the presence of community sewage treatment facilities is constrained by the County SOAR Ordinance. However, such facilities could increase the demand for zone changes from OS-160 ac, OS-80ac, OS-40 ac and OS-20 ac to OS-10 ac; or RA- 20 ac, RA-10 ac, RA-5 ac and RA-4 ac to RA-2 ac; or RE-10 ac, RE-5 ac and RE-4 ac to RE-2 ac. Although the theoretical number of additional parcels due to potential future zone changes is approximately 14,198 OS-zoned parcels, 483 RA-zoned parcels and 311 RE-zoned parcels, there are several factors that would make such future zone changes less likely to occur. These include:

- Much of the Open Space designated land in Ventura County contains slopes or other constraints that would limit rezoning and subdivision of land down to 10 acres in area.
- Much of the Rural-designated land in Ventura County contains substandard private roads or other constraints that would limit rezoning and subdivision of land down to two acres in area.
- The cost of constructing and operating a community sewage treatment facility is very high and would be financially impractical in most areas of the county where density is low (i.e., Agricultural or Open Space designated lands).
- Establishing a new community sewage treatment facility requires an amendment to the Public Facilities Map of the *Goals, Policies and Programs* of the General Plan (policy 4.4.2-1), a Conditional Use Permit, and additional environmental review (e.g., EIR) would be required at that time.
- This update includes a proposed amendment to policy 3.2.2-5(6) increasing the minimum parcel size of the Open Space designation from 10 acres to 20 acres.

Based on the above factors, the growth inducing impact of potential community sewage treatment facilities in Agricultural, Open Space and Rural designated areas is potentially significant, but is too speculative to be further addressed at this time and would require future environmental analysis as part of any future zone change and subdivision map.

The proposed amendment is also growth inducing because it could facilitate land divisions in areas where conventional sewage treatment methods are constrained. Although such land divisions may be allowed under the General Plan/Zoning designation, septic systems or on-site sewage treatment facilities may not be functionally or financially feasible in some areas of the county. As an example, the minimum parcel size in the Rural-designated portions of the Santa Rosa Valley is 2 acres, but because septic systems add nitrates to the groundwater aquifer the minimum parcel size to avoid a significant cumulative impact is 2.875 acres. Therefore, a community sewer system in the Santa Rosa

Valley could allow the permissible density on Rural designated parcels to increase by 44 percent and would facilitate the construction of second dwelling units. Applying this information to the existing vacant land within the Santa Rosa Valley, approximately 175 additional parcels could be theoretically created and up to 980 second dwelling units could be constructed under a ministerial Zone Clearance (no CEQA review). Notwithstanding this potential increase, the increase is consistent with the planned land use in that area.

Although the growth inducing impacts are speculative at this point in time, they are considered potentially significant.

Establishment of Lewis Road Existing Community

Re-designating and rezoning the Lewis Road property from State or Federal Facility/OS-160 ac to Existing Community/RPD (30 du/ac) could be viewed as growth inducing since the RPD zone allows more numerous and intense land uses than the OS zone. However, the existing uses on the subject property were conditionally permitted under the category of Government Buildings, which has no specific limitations on the type or intensity of land use. Therefore, the potential for further development of the site can be regarded as no different under the proposed project. The one difference is that the uses currently have to fulfill a specific governmental purpose, whereas the County could lease or sell the property to some individual or group that would not be limited to this governmental purpose (e.g., market rate multi-family housing), provided that it is for some "public purpose" per the terms of the sale to the County. Assuming the worst-case scenario, the 57.65 acres could accommodate up to 172 dwelling units (516 persons assuming 3 persons/du). This scenario is highly unlikely to occur since the County has no intention to lease or sell the property, or any portion thereof, for uses that do not fulfill a governmental function or public purpose (e.g., facilities serving special needs groups). Moreover, any changes in intensity of permitted land uses would require a CUP modification or other discretionary entitlement, which require additional environmental review.

Based on the above discussion, the growth inducing impact of this component is not regarded as significant.

Regional Road Network Improvements

Amending the Public Facilities Map of the Goals, Policies and Programs to show road widening that will be necessary to ensure that the Regional Road Network will operate at an acceptable level of service, and the subsequent widening of those roads, is growth accommodating (i.e., growth inducing).

In the unincorporated area, traffic policy 4.2.2-5 of the *Goals, Policies and Programs* acts as a constraint to growth. As discussed in section 4.14 of this EIR, Highway 33 (from Casitas Vista Road through Oak View) and Highway 118 (from Highway 23 to the City of Moorpark) are currently operating below the prescribed LOS standard, and there aren't sufficient funds to make road improvements in a reasonable period of time to bring these roads up to an acceptable LOS. Therefore, discretionary permits that would add traffic to these roads are not currently being approved in these areas. If these roads are planned and constructed to add travel lanes and the Board finds that there is a full funding commitment and the improvements would be completed in a reasonable period of time, this could remove a growth constraint and be considered growth inducing. However, the growth would be consistent with the existing General Plan and zoning. The impacts of this growth are addressed in the other sections of this EIR and the *Ojai Valley Area Plan FEIR* (1994).

In unincorporated areas that are designated Agricultural, Open Space or Rural, any inducement for future General Plan amendments to change to more intense land uses due to the availability of adequately functioning roads is constrained by the County SOAR Ordinance, at least through the year 2020. Nonetheless, in Urban and Existing Community designated areas the SOAR ordinance does not apply and general plan amendments and zone changes may be more likely to occur in theses areas. However, these future amendments are speculative and may not occur for a variety of other reasons.

For cities in, and counties adjoining, Ventura County, there are no policy constraints that would prevent growth from occurring if roads of the unincorporated Regional Road Network fall below the

County's LOS standards. Widening roads of the Regional Road Network would accommodate inter-city commuter traffic and could induce new residents and employees to move to Ventura County. Additionally, the cities and adjoining counties could entertain changes to their land use plans to increase development potential in anticipation of an adequately functioning Regional Road Network.

Based on the above factors, planning and constructing improvements to the Regional Road Network could potentially have a significant growth inducing impact. It should be noted that the proposed amendment to policy 4.2.2-2 would partially reduce the growth inducing impacts by limiting road improvement design, sequencing and timing to ensure that the improvements do not occur before there is an actual demonstrated need.

Traffic Policy Exceptions for Affordable Housing Projects, Cultural Heritage Sites and Agricultural-Related Uses

The proposed traffic policy exceptions for affordable housing projects, cultural heritage sites and agricultural-related uses are growth inducing since they remove an existing policy constraint. The potential growth of each of these categories of uses is discussed below.

Currently, only the Ojai Valley and Las Posas Valley contain roads that are confirmed to be operating below an acceptable Level of Service (Hwy 33 and 118, respectively). Land within the Las Posas Valley is mostly designated for non-urban purposes and no land is zoned for multi-family residential uses. However, it is possible that farmworker housing complexes could be proposed on AE or OS zoned land in the Las Posas Valley. Since no farmworker housing complexes are proposed at this time, the impacts from this type of land use are speculative.

The Ojai Valley contains eight vacant parcels that are designated and zoned for multi-family residential purposes (ranging from RPD-9 du/ac to RPD-15 du/ac), which are currently constrained by the traffic policies of the *Goals, Policies and Programs* and *Ojai Valley Area Plan*. The maximum number of dwelling units that would be allowed on these parcels if this exception were enacted is 80 units. Assuming one AM and PM peak hour trip per dwelling unit, the maximum traffic impact would be that 80 trips could be added to Hwy 33 during the peak AM (6-9 AM) and PM (4-7 PM) periods. This would represent approximately a two percent increase over existing traffic levels on a road that is currently operating at LOS F during peak periods. Although the potential growth is consistent with the General Plan, the growth inducing impact is significant because of the potential traffic impacts to Hwy 33.

In December of 2000, amendments to the County Non-Coastal Ordinance Code for the preservation of cultural heritage resources were approved. These amendments contained exceptions to the zoning development standards and were intended to provide an economic incentive to property owners to have their property declared county historical landmarks. One of those incentives allows a property owner to apply for a lot split that would result in a second parcel, provided that the cultural resource qualifies for Landmark status and the Cultural Heritage Board opines that the project meets their preservation guidelines. At the Board hearing on this subject, several property owners with otherwise qualifying properties located in the Ojai Valley noted that they could not take advantage of this provision because of the General Plan traffic policies, and asked that an exception be made.

The maximum number of qualifying parcels in the Ojai Valley is approximately 121 parcels. Assuming that each of these parcels qualified for a lot split, a maximum of 121 additional dwelling units could be constructed, adding a comparable number of peak hour trips on Hwy 33. Since 2000, no applications have been received for additional parcels outside of the Ojai Valley. Based on this level of activity, few of the potential additional parcels/dwelling units are expected to develop.

As stated in section 4.24.1 above, Agriculture and Agricultural Operations related uses include animal husbandry (e.g., horse stables); agricultural contractors service and storage yards; crop and orchard packing, storage & preliminary processing facilities; wineries; accessory structures (e.g., barns and equipment storage); agricultural sales facilities; and agricultural promotional uses. According to Assessor's Office records, there are 74 parcels with "livestock operations", 18 parcels with "animal specialties (egg production, poultry, etc.)" parcels, 36 parcels with "packinghouses" and 9 parcels with "agricultural related uses" within the County as a whole. The impact of establishing new agriculturally

related facilities and relocating packinghouses to the unincorporated area of the county could be significant.

4.24.3 Mitigation Measures/Options

Because the CEQA Guidelines do not differentiate between significant and less-than-significant growth-inducing impacts, there is no specific requirement to address mitigation measures to growth-inducing impacts. Nonetheless, for legislative acts such as General Plan amendments, the decision-making body has the prerogative of denying or modifying the proposed "project", or any portion thereof, to avoid or lessen the project's growth-inducing impacts. As such, the following options are offered for consideration to reduce this project's growth inducing impacts, although the decision-making body (Board of Supervisors) is under no legal obligation to adopt them:

Parcels Size Exceptions For Farmworker Housing Complexes

If this component is denied, the growth-inducing impacts would be avoided, but the opportunities for developing farmworker housing complexes within the Sphere of Influence of each of the cities and in proximity to unincorporated areas designated Urban or Existing Community will be limited to the approximate 200 parcels identified in the *Farmworker Housing Study*. Because of the reluctance of most of these property owners to sell or lease their land for farmworker housing, few farmworker housing complexes may be built in the unincorporated area of the County.

As an option to the case-by-case approach of the proposed amendment, the Board could direct that the Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance be amended to limit the number of farmworker housing complexes that may be constructed within/adjacent to an individual city Sphere of Influence or adjacent to an unincorporated area designated Urban or Existing Community. This option would take several months to analyze, formulate and process. In addition, the Board would have to determine what factors the limit should be based on.

Building Coverage Exceptions for Crop or Orchard Related Uses and Farmworker Housing Complexes

If this component is denied, the growth-inducing impacts would be avoided, but the opportunities for developing, expanding or relocating crop or orchard related uses and developing farmworker housing complexes in the Agricultural and Open Space areas of the County would be significantly constrained.

The Board could reduce the scope of the proposed exemption to <u>existing</u> crop or orchard related facilities, but still allow an exemption for new farmworker housing complexes. This option would reduce the potential for existing packing, storage or preliminary processing facilities located in the cities from relocating/expanding onto unincorporated land designated Agricultural or Open Space. However, the ability to establish new facilities in response to changing crop types would continue to be constrained.

As another option, the Board could limit the scope of the exemption to parcels that are currently non-conforming as to the minimum parcel size of the land use designation, thereby avoiding the over-covering of conforming Agricultural of Open Space parcels. Although there may be some merit to this approach for crop or orchard related uses, this option would be counter to the proposed parcel size exceptions for farmworker housing complexes (see previous section).

Community Sewage Treatment Facilities in Non-Urban Areas

If this component is denied, the growth-inducing impacts would be avoided, but the ability of the County to respond to future directives of the Regional Water Quality Control Board or mitigate other identified groundwater quality problems may be constrained.

As an option, the Board could interpret policy 3.1.2-11 and the Guidelines for Orderly Development as not applying directly to community sewage treatment facilities, but only to development that would require new or significant expansion of such facilities (e.g., subdivision maps). The drawback with this option is that it would not allow new subdivisions to be approved to help pay for new or significant

expansion of existing community sewage treatment facilities that may be needed to improve existing, deficient groundwater quality.

As a further option, the proposed exemption could be rewritten to allow development that would require new or significant expansion of community sewage treatment facilities, but only in instances where the ground water basin is already below groundwater quality standards.

Establishment of Lewis Road Existing Community

Since the growth inducing impact of this component is not regarded as significant, no options are offered.

Regional Road Network Improvements

If this component were denied, the proposed revisions to the population, dwelling unit and employment forecasts, and any other amendments based on these forecasts, would have to also be denied and the time horizon of the General Plan would remain 2010. These actions would be necessary to maintain internal consistency of the General Plan per with the requirements of State law. Even if this "no project" alternative were followed, the growth within the unincorporated area and adjoining cities and counties would not be reduced.

The alternatives section of this EIR addresses options that would reduce the prescribed Level of Service standards for specific roads of the Regional Road Network (e.g., from LOS D to LOS E). In theory, this may entice some commuters to avoid driving on some roads during peak hours by seeking to live and work in the same community or discourage employment generating land uses from expanding or locating in Ventura County. However, as evidenced by development and commuting patterns in the Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Diego regions, these alternatives are unlikely to significantly curtail growth or reduce traffic volumes. The adverse environmental, economic and social impacts of these alternatives, however, are as follows (section 4.14-Transportation/Circulation):

Traffic Level of Service - Decrease of traffic LOS to "E" resulting in unstable flow with lower operating speeds and major delays and stoppages, or LOS "F" resulting in forced flow operation with low speeds and stoppages for long periods due to congestion.

Public Safety - Increase in stop-and-go and slow traffic conditions resulting in increased driver frustration and traffic accidents, and an overall decrease in emergency response capabilities (police, fire, ambulance).

Energy – Slower traffic speeds will decrease the fuel efficiency of vehicles resulting in increased fuel consumption.

Air Quality - Decrease in the fuel efficiency of vehicles will result in increased air quality impacts in Ventura County, which is a non-attainment area;

Economic - Increase in travel time and/or vehicle miles traveled resulting in decreased worker productivity, delay in the transportation of goods and decrease in tourism, which will have a negative effect on the overall economy of Ventura County and act as a disincentive to future economic investment and growth.

In addition, lowering the LOS standard would, in the near term, remove an existing policy constraint to growth in some portions of the unincorporated area of the County (e.g., Las Posas Valley). Therefore, lowering the LOS standard would be growth inducing.

Traffic Policy Exceptions for Affordable Housing Projects, Cultural Heritage Sites and Agricultural-Related Uses

If this component is denied, the growth-inducing impacts would be avoided, but the ability of the County to accommodate affordable housing, promote the retention of cultural heritage sites and allow for the expansion or relocation of agriculturally related uses would be constrained.

As an option to the case-by-case approach, the Board could impose limitations so that these types of projects do not unduly impact prescribed areas of the county. This option would take several months to analyze, formulate and process. In addition, the Board would have to determine what factors the limits should be based on.

5. Alternatives to the Proposed Project

5.1 No Project Alternative

The "no project" alternative assumes that the proposed amendments to the General Plan would not be approved and the existing General Plan would remain as is, at least to the year 2010.

Under the existing General Plan, the land use designations for the unincorporated area of the County would remain the same as those of the proposed General Plan, except for Lewis Road Existing Community. Therefore, the impacts from development under the existing General Plan would essentially be the same as the proposed General Plan.

With regard to planned improvements to the Regional Road Network, several of the proposed road widening segments needed by the year 2020 would not be reflected in the General Plan and not included within the County's TIMF Ordinance. This alternative would result in a significant adverse impact related to decreased traffic LOS, decreased public safety, increased fuel consumption, increased air pollution, adverse economic impacts (see section 4.14-Transportation and Circulation). Conversely, not widening these roads would avoid incremental impacts on biological resources and agricultural soils, and avoid short-term construction impacts (see sections 4.3-Biological Resources, 4.4-Farmland Resources, 4.1-Air Quality, 4.13-Noise and Vibration).

With regard to the impacts associated with the proposed land use and traffic policy amendments, the growth-inducing impacts described in section 4.24 would be avoided, but the project objectives as outlined in section 2-Project Description would not be met.

5.2 Lower Traffic LOS Standard on Santa Rosa Road and Moorpark Road from "D" to "E"

Santa Rosa Road and Moorpark Road are currently two lane roads and the General Plan shows that Santa Rosa Road should be widened to 4 lanes by 2010 in order to maintain the County LOS standard "D" or better. According to the County Public Works Agency, the traffic information they have indicates that Santa Rosa Road is currently operating at LOS "E."

As the Santa Rosa Valley has developed over the past two decades, the Valley residents have increasingly expressed their opposition to widening Santa Rosa Road and Moorpark Road to four lanes, believing that their "rural" lifestyle would be adversely affected and that widening these roads would simply induce more traffic, especially since Highways 101 and 118 are currently operating below the County's LOS standard. In order for these roads to not be widened during the planning period (2020), the County would have to reduce its acceptable LOS standard for these two roads from LOS "D" to "E."

In late-2003, the PWA hired the traffic consulting firm Katz, Okitsu & Associates to recalibrate and rerun the Ventura Countywide Traffic Model under different traffic constraint scenarios. One of the scenarios was to limit Santa Rosa Road and Moorpark Road to two lanes. The result was that, if Highway 101 was widened to eight lanes and Highway 118 was widened to four lanes, the total number of Average Daily Trips (ADT) in 2020 on Santa Rosa Road and Moorpark Road would remain essentially the same and not shift to either Highway 101 or 118.

Although lowering the LOS standard for Santa Rosa Road and Moorpark Road to LOS "E" would reduce significant, unmitigated impacts associated with widening these roads (i.e., biological resources, loss of agricultural soils, short-term construction impacts), the lower LOS standard would have the following incrementally adverse impacts (see section 4.18-Transportation/Circulation):

> **Traffic Level of Service** - Decrease of Traffic LOS to "E" resulting in unstable flow with lower operating speeds and major delays and stoppages. This is a significant impact of this alternative.

Public Safety - Increase in stop-and-go and slow traffic conditions resulting in increased driver frustration and traffic accidents, and an overall decrease in emergency response capabilities (police, fire, ambulance). This is a potentially significant impact of this alternative.

Energy - Decrease in travel speed would result in the decreased fuel efficiency of vehicles, resulting in increased fuel consumption. This is not considered a significant impact if just Santa Rosa Road and Moorpark Road are lowered to LOS "E."

Air Quality - Decrease in the fuel efficiency of vehicles resulting in increased air quality impacts in Ventura County, which is a non-attainment area. This is not considered a significant impact if just Santa Rosa Road and Moorpark Road are lowered to LOS "E."

Economic - Increase in travel time and/or vehicle miles traveled resulting in decreased worker productivity, delay in the transportation of goods and decrease in tourism, which will have a negative effect on the overall economy of Ventura County and act as a disincentive to future economic investment and growth. This is not considered a significant impact if just Santa Rosa Road and Moorpark Road are lowered to LOS "E."

In addition, lowering the LOS standard in the short-term (2020) ~~will~~ may simply delay the ~~inevitable~~ need to widen the road to four lanes when the increase in traffic sometime after 2020 reaches a point where the LOS reaches LOS "F" and the County is forced to widen the roads per the requirements of State law and the County Congestion Management Plan (CMP). Although SCAG's 2004 Regional Transportation Plan, *DESTINATION 2030* shows that the projected amount of traffic (26,000 ADT) on Santa Rosa Road would still be within LOS "E", it would be reaching the upper limits of the "E" range (27,000 ADT) by the year 2030. ~~Moreover, d~~During the intervening period of time before the LOS reaches "F", the County would not have been collecting TIMF funds from development and would have been left with little or no financial ability to widen the road. This situation would leave the County in the position of having the transportation and circulation element of the General Plan not correlated with the land use element, thereby exposing the County to potential litigation. Moreover, if the County is not able to prepare a Deficiency Plan to widen these roads to the satisfaction of VCTC, the County's gas tax revenues could be in jeopardy per the CMP.

As a counter argument to the eventual need to widen Santa Rosa Road because the LOS would eventually fall to "F", some residents of the Santa Rosa Valley have speculated that as the traffic levels on Santa Rosa Road increase and travel speeds decrease and delays increase, motorists traveling between Camarillo, Moorpark and Simi Valley will simply seek alternative routes (Highways 118 and 101). According to the County PWA Transportation Department, this is unlikely to occur because the traffic conditions on Highways 118 and 101 would not be substantially better than the conditions on Santa Rosa Road.

Under the traffic policies of the General Plan, discretionary development cannot be approved if it would add traffic to a road where the LOS standard is not currently being met, unless there is a full funding commitment for widening the road within a reasonable period of time. Therefore, lowering the LOS standard on Santa Rosa Road and Moorpark Road to LOS "E" would allow discretionary development to be approved in the near term; therefore, this alternative is growth inducing. Most of the anticipated growth would be consistent with the land use element of the General Plan and zoning, unless property owners filed General Plan or zoning amendments to increase the development potential. Since the Santa Rosa Valley is currently constrained by the lack of sewers and high nitrate levels in the groundwater, approval of GPAs or zone changes would seem unlikely until such time as a community sewer system is constructed (see section 4.24-Growth Inducement).

5.3 Additionally Lower Traffic LOS Standard on Highways 34 and 118 and Santa Clara Avenue from "D" to "E"

Los Angeles Avenue (Highway 118) between Vineyard Avenue and Moorpark city limits, Lewis Road (Highway 34) between Camarillo city limits and Highway 118, and Santa Clara Avenue are currently two lane roads. The current General Plan shows that Highway 118 between Vineyard Avenue and Santa Clara Avenue and between Highway 34 and Moorpark city limits and Santa Clara Avenue

should be widened to 4 lanes by 2010 in order to maintain the County LOS standard "D" or better. According to the County Public Works Agency, the traffic information they have indicates that portions of Highway 118 are currently operating at LOS "E" and the intersection of Highways 118 and 34 is operating at LOS "F".

As traffic has increased along the State highways in the Las Posas Valley over the past two decades, some residents of the unincorporated community of Somis have increasingly expressed their opposition to widening Highways 118 and 34 and Santa Clara Avenue from two lanes to four lanes, believing that their "rural" lifestyle and community character would be adversely affected and that widening these roads would be growth-inducing and simply induce more traffic on these roads, especially since Highway 101 and Santa Rosa Road are currently operating below the County's LOS standard. Additionally, some residents within Nyeland Acres and Somis have opposed the widening of Santa Clara Avenue for similar reasons. In order for these roads, or portions thereof, to not be widened, the County must reduce the acceptable LOS standard for these two roads from LOS "D" to "E" and convince Caltrans and VCTC that the highways should not be widened. However, since the segment of Highway 118 east of Highway 34 is projected to operate at LOS F by 2020 if not widened, maintaining this segment of Highway 118 as two lanes is not feasible per the requirements of State law and the CMP; therefore, is not considered feasible as part of this alternative.

Since this alternative involves State Highways, which are not under the jurisdiction of the County, the feasibility of this alternative is not known.

In late-2003, the PWA hired the traffic consulting firm Katz, Okitsu & Associates to recalibrate and rerun the Ventura Countywide Traffic Model under different traffic constraint scenarios. One of the scenarios was to limit Highways 118 and 34 and Santa Clara Avenue (in addition to Santa Rosa Road and Moorpark Road) to two lanes. The result was that the total number of Average Daily Trips (ADT) on each of these roads in the year 2020 would be reduced by 3 to 16 percent (see EIR Appendix 8.3). Conversely, the ADTs on Highway 101 and Santa Rosa Road would slightly increase ~~to a point where it would operate at LOS "F"~~. Highway 101 is projected to be operating at close to the upper end of the LOS E range or at the lower end of the LOS F range by the year 2020. In addition, the ADTs on Central Avenue between Highway 232 and Santa Clara Avenue would increase to a point where the road would operate at LOS E, and should be widened to four lanes. Since there are no other suitable east-west routes to handle the shift in traffic, this alternative ~~would~~ may have a significant adverse, unmitigated impact.

Although lowering the LOS standard for Highways 118 and 34 and Santa Clara Avenue (plus Santa Rosa Road and Moorpark Road) to LOS "E" would reduce the significant, unmitigated impacts associated with widening these roads (i.e., loss of biological resources, agricultural soils, community character), the lower LOS standard would have the following incremental and cumulative significant adverse impacts (see section 4.14-Transportation/Circulation):

Traffic Level of Service - Decrease of traffic LOS to "E" on Highways 118 and 34, Santa Clara Avenue, and Central Avenue resulting in unstable flow with lower operating speeds and major delays and stoppages. In addition, Highway 101 may operate at LOS "F" ~~for Highway 101~~ resulting in forced flow operation with low speeds and stoppages for long periods due to congestion, and this alternative would not allow for any suitable east-west alternative route through Ventura County.

Public Safety - Increase in stop-and-go and slow traffic conditions resulting in increased driver frustration and traffic accidents, and an overall decrease in emergency response capabilities (police, fire, ambulance).

Energy - Decrease in travel speed would result in the decreased fuel efficiency of vehicles, resulting in increased fuel consumption.

Air Quality - Decrease in the fuel efficiency of vehicles resulting in increased air quality impacts in Ventura County, which is a non-attainment area.

Economic - Increase in travel time and/or vehicle miles traveled resulting in decreased worker productivity, delay in the transportation of goods and decrease in tourism, which will have a

negative effect on the overall economy of Ventura County and act as a disincentive to future economic investment and growth.

In addition, lowering the LOS standard in the short-term (2020) ~~will~~ may simply delay the ~~inevitable~~ need to widen the roads to four lanes when the increase in traffic sometime after 2020 reaches a point where the LOS reaches LOS "F" and the County is forced to widen the roads per the requirements of State law and the County Congestion Management Plan. This situation would leave the County in the position of having the transportation and circulation element of the General Plan not correlated with the land use element, thereby exposing the County to potential litigation. Moreover, if the County is not be able to prepare a Deficiency Plan to widen these roads to the satisfaction of VCTC, the County's gas tax revenues could be in jeopardy per the CMP.

Under the traffic policies of the General Plan, discretionary development cannot be approved if it would add traffic to a road where the LOS standard is not currently being met, unless there is a full funding commitment for widening the road within a reasonable period of time. Therefore, lowering the LOS standard on Highways 118 and 34 and Santa Clara Avenue (plus Santa Rosa Road and Moorpark Road) to LOS "E" would allow discretionary development to be approved. Because this would remove a constraint to growth, this alternative is growth inducing in the short term. Most of the anticipated growth would be consistent with the land use element of the General Plan and zoning, unless property owners filed General Plan or zoning amendments to increase the development potential. Since the Las Posas Valley is currently constrained by the SOAR Ordinance, approval of GPAs or zone changes would seem unlikely until 2020 (see section 4.24-Growth Inducement).

5.4 Highway 34 Bypass Around Somis

Widening Highway 34 through the community of Somis to four lanes would have a significant, unmitigated adverse impact on community character because the acquisition of additional road right-of-way and construction of travel lanes, on-street parking, curbs and gutters, and sidewalks would physically alter front yard areas or result in the demolition of several existing residential and commercial buildings. Increasing the highway width through the community of Somis would also impede bicycle or pedestrian access across the highway between the east and west sides of the community.

Instead of widening Highway 34 in its current location, the Highway could be realigned to the east side of the community leaving the existing road for local traffic (see Figure 5.4-1).

Most of the land needed for right-of-way acquisition for the bypass is in agricultural production (row crops, nursery stock and green houses) and is designated Agricultural on the County General Plan. The elevation of the existing community is approximately three to four feet above the adjacent agricultural land. In addition, a new road crossing would have to be constructed over Fox Barranca, which runs west to east, is located immediately north of the community, and is approximately 15 feet below the grade of the surrounding agricultural land. Notwithstanding these topographic challenges, road construction is feasible with the importation of fill dirt and re-grading.

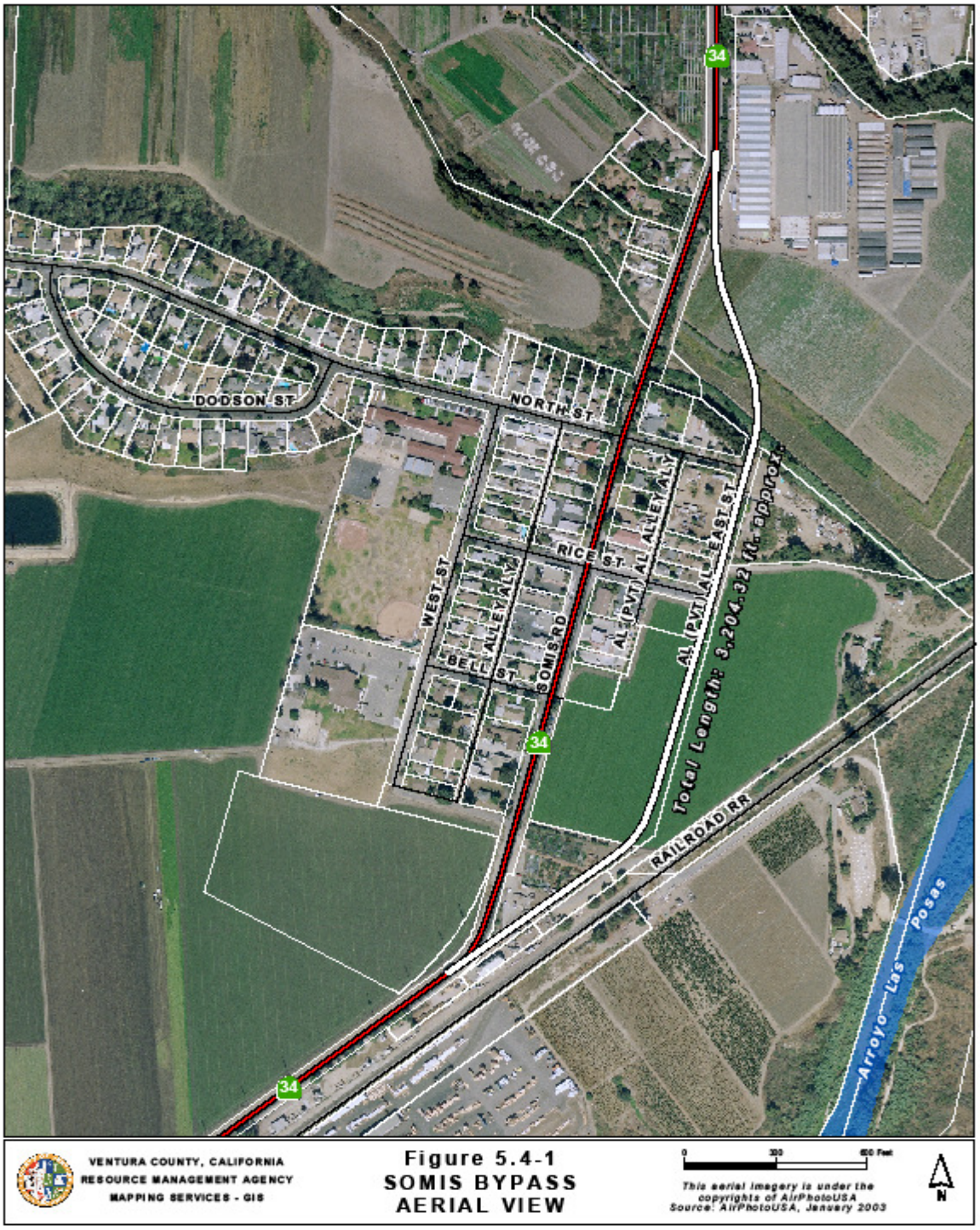
The County Public Works Agency estimates that the cost of this bypass would be approximately $9 million. In contrast, the cost of widening the highway through Somis would be approximately $4.2 million. The financial feasibility of the alternative is not known since the funding priorities for improvements to the State highway are the responsibility of VCTC.

Although the Highway 34 bypass alternative would mitigate the adverse impacts on the character of Somis, it would have the following impacts:

- Construction of a new road crossing over Fox Barranca would impact biological resources (wetlands). Significance of this impact cannot be determined at this time, but must be regarded as potentially significant. Significant impacts to wetlands can be mitigated by reclaiming or restoring wetlands of comparable value elsewhere in the County. Nonetheless, the feasibility of this mitigation is unknown at this time.

- Construction of a new road on agricultural land would result in the additional loss of 3.64 acres of agricultural soils (compared to the proposed project), which is not regarded as incrementally significant.
- The Highway 34 bypass would isolate several existing commercial uses that rely on highway traffic for their economic viability, thereby fostering their closure.

Figure 5.4-1
Somis Bypass



5.5 Other Alternatives Considered and Rejected

The ERRC directed that the SEIR contain a section that discusses in one location the alternatives that were considered as part of the public review process, but rejected because the alternatives were infeasible, did not meet the project objectives, or had greater impacts than the project or other alternatives. These alternatives are discussed in the paragraphs that follow:

Highway 34 Somis Bypass Paralleling the Railroad Right-of-Way

Mr. Kerkhoff described a Highway 34 bypass alternative that would parallel the railroad right of way and move its intersection with Highway 118 approximately one mile to the east. This alternative would completely bypass the community of Somis, thereby reducing the impacts on community character, and reduce the improvements needed for the current intersection of Highway 34 and 118.

The one advantage of this alternative is that it would have less residual traffic noise on existing Somis community residences than the Highway 34 Somis Bypass discussed in Section 5.4 or the existing environmental setting. Nonetheless, this SEIR concludes that traffic noise impacts can be mitigated to a less-than-significant level by setbacks and/or noise barriers that are part of road design (section 4.13). In addition, some residents of the Las Posas Valley believe that improvements to the existing Highway 34/118 intersection and road segments would alter the rural character of the area, although this SEIR did not find that this was a significant impact.

On the negative side, however, this alternative was determined to have significantly greater impacts on existing utilities, biological resources and the loss of agricultural soils, and is significantly more expensive to implement than the Highway 34 Somis Bypass considered in section 5.4.

The Caltrans' Initial Study/Environmental Assessment for the Route 118 at Donlon Road/Somis Road Intersection Improvements (December 1999) reported that this alternative would:

- Require the relocation of existing utilities running adjacent to the railroad right of way
- Require a significant amount of fill material and structural improvements because much of the proposed road right of way lies within the 100 year floodplain.
- Cause major impacts to the riparian/wetlands of Fox Barranca, Coyote Canyon and Sand Canyon. By comparison, the Somis bypass discussed in section 5.4 would only cause impacts to Fox Barranca.
- Require the acquisition of 44+ acres for a two lane cross-section, most of which is in agricultural production. By comparison, the Somis bypass discussed in section 5.4 is a four lane cross-section and only required 3.64 acres of important farmlands more than widening highway 34 to four lanes in its current location.
- Cost an estimated $11.14 million (1999). Using the Caltrans price index and CPI, this equates to approximately $19 million in today's dollars (±15%). By comparison, Somis bypass discussed in section 5.4 would cost an estimated $9 million.

This alternative was determined to have significantly greater impacts on biological and farmland resources, and cost over twice as much as the alternative discussed in section 5.4; therefore, this alternative was rejected.

Highway 34 Somis Bypass – One way Couplet

Ms. Arkin proposed an alternative routing scenario for Highway 34 through and adjacent to the community of Somis. The existing two lanes through Somis would be retained, but altered into a one-way, southbound only configuration and that only a two lane bypass to be built to the east of the community to handle northbound traffic, resulting in lower costs and less loss of agricultural land.

This alternative proposal, while it may reduce the traffic along the current alignment of Highway 34 by half, is an infeasible alternative due to the construction requirements of Caltrans. These types of "couplet" configurations are much more common in urban areas (e.g., Palm Springs) and usually are not approved in more rural settings where there is land available for conventional highway configurations. Moreover, this alternative would have more impacts on the community of Somis than the proposed alternative described in the SEIR. Not only would the southbound traffic still transect the community, Caltrans would require that Rice Street, North Street and, potentially, Bell Street be improved to allow east-west connections to the north and south bound highway roadways. These streets are currently local streets with truck access restrictions. Although this alternative might incrementally reduce the impacts on agricultural land, this alternative would have greater impacts on the character of the community of Somis.

Increased Rail Access to Reduce Truck Traffic on Hwy 118 and 34

Comments made at the ERRC public hearings on the General Plan Update SEIR asserted that if the transportation section had examined the alternative of shifting goods movement from road based trucks to rail freight, the need for widening Highway 118 west of Moorpark and Highway 34 north of Camarillo would be eliminated.

VCTC has completed several studies that evaluate truck and vehicle movement and distribution within Ventura County. The most recent is the Port of Hueneme Access Study, prepared by Wilbur Smith Associates, dated December 1, 2000, which is an update of previous studies completed in 1988 and 1990 by VCTC and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). The primary objective of the study was to provide information to decision-makers on existing and future conditions at the Port and in its vicinity, and to present improvement strategies that would reduce the effects associated with Port-related truck traffic.

Data from Section 5 of the Port of Hueneme Access Study, indicates that 20 percent of the traffic along this section of Highway 118 is comprised of trucks of various types. Container and enclosed trailers that could be diverted to transportation by freight trains comprised 31 percent of this truck traffic. This represents about 6 percent of all vehicular traffic using Highway 118. The 6 percent adjustment was applied to all traffic volume projections contained in Appendix 8.3b for Highway 118 west of Moorpark. In conclusion, the reduction in volumes was too small to change the need to widen Highway 118 to four lanes under any of the alternatives. Therefore, this alternative would not meet the project objectives; which, in part, is to ensure that the County Regional Road Network functions at the adopted Level of Service or better.

6. General Plan Consistency Analysis

The State Government Code requires that general plans be internally consistent, therefore, general plan amendments need to be reviewed for consistency with the goals and policies of the general plan that are not being amended. In addition, the CEQA Guidelines require that projects be examined for consistency with existing plans, zoning and other applicable land use controls, especially as these plans and controls serve to protect the existing physical environment. More specifically, the County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines requires a review with the General Plan's "environmental goals and policies."

Prior to release of the Draft EIR for public review, the Planning Division staff reviewed the proposed General Plan update for consistency with other General Plan goals and policies, and consistency with zoning and other applicable land use controls. The following is a summary of the results of that review:

6.1 General Plan Goals and Policies

The Introduction chapter of the *Goals, Policies and Programs* of the County General Plan provides the following guidance as it applies to interpretation of the General Plan:

> "Since goals are general in nature, the goals should not be interpreted in the same way as policies and programs. Goals are meant as targets toward which the County's actions are directed, but do not serve as absolute standards. In other words, although the County is committed to strive toward attaining a particular goal, a goal may not always be attainable in an absolute sense. Policies and programs, on the other hand, are to be read as the specific means by which the County will move toward carrying out its goals.
>
> The goals, policies and programs of the General Plan are cumulative and, as such, individual goals, policies and programs should be used and interpreted in the context of other goals, policies and programs. Since a goal may be implemented through multiple policies and/or programs, and a specific policy or program may serve to implement more than one goal, the goals, policies and programs for a subject (e.g., biological resources), should be read in the context of other similar goals, policies and programs. In cases where there are multiple goals (or policies or programs), and two or more goals (or policies or programs) address the same subject, the more specific and restrictive goal (or policy or program) would take precedence. In this regard, goals are compared to goals, policies are compared to policies, and programs are compared to programs." (G*oals, Policies and Programs.* pg. 3).

The following General Plan consistency assessment is organized under three categories; SOAR Ordinance, Environmental Policies, and Non-Environmental Policies:

SOAR Ordinance

In 1998, the voters of Ventura County approved the County's SAVE OPEN-SPACE and AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES (S.O.A.R.) ORDINANCE. That ordinance amended the General Plan to prohibit most amendments to the goals and policies and land use map that applies to Agricultural, Open Space and Rural designations, unless the countywide electorate approves the amendments. Notwithstanding this general requirement, Section h) of the SOAR ordinance states:

> "The Board of Supervisors, without a vote of the people, may amend the provisions of the General Plan which apply to the Agricultural, Open Space or Rural designations, …, for the express purpose of further protecting and preserving resources identified in the General Plan, provided that said amendment(s) are consistent with the Findings and Purpose of the ordinance adopting these provisions of the General Plan."

The Findings and Purpose of the SOAR ordinance are summarized as follows:

a. …"protection of existing agricultural, open space and rural lands is of critical importance to present and future residents of the County of Ventura."

b. "Agriculture has been and remains the major contributor to the economy of the County of Ventura…" This high productivity is made possible by the County's abundance of the natural resources required for agricultural production; primarily soils, water, climate and topography."

c. "Ventura County is one of the principal agricultural counties in the State…"

d. "The County of Ventura with its unique combination of soils, micro-climate and hydrology, has become one of the finest growing regions in the world."

e. "Open Space likewise contributes to the welfare of the County, …, not only though the productive use of the land for grazing and other non-irrigated usage, such as forest lands, rangelands, and agricultural lands not designated Agricultural, but through the preservation of unique natural resources including, but not limited to, areas required for the preservation of plant and animal life, habitat for fish and wildlife, areas required for ecologic and other scientific study purposes, rivers, bays, estuaries, coastal beaches, lakeshores, banks of rivers and streams and watershed lands. Open space contributes to the public health and safety additionally by setting aside from development those lands which require special management or regulation because of hazardous or special conditions such as earth quake fault zones, unstable soil areas, flood plains, watersheds, areas presenting high fire risks, areas required for the protection of water quality, and water reservoirs and areas required for the protection and enhancement of air quality. Open space promotes efficient municipal services and facilities by confining urban development to defined development areas."

f. "Rural designation…serves not only to buffer intense urban usage from agricultural and open space lands, but it offers small scale agricultural production while allowing for low-density and low intensity land uses and is a critical component in accommodating the full range of residential environments."

g. "Urban encroachment into Agricultural, Open Space and Rural designated areas will impair agriculture and threaten the public health, safety and welfare by causing increased traffic congestion, associated air pollution, and potentially serious water problems, such as pollution, depletion, and sedimentation of available water resources. Such urban encroachment would eventually result in the unnecessary and expensive extension of public services and facilities as well as inevitable conflicts between urban and open space and agricultural uses."

h. "The unique character of the County of Ventura and quality of life of County residents depend on the protection of a substantial amount of open space lands. The protection of such lands not only ensures the continued viability of agriculture, but also protects the available water supply and contributes to flood control and the protection of wildlife, environmentally sensitive areas, and irreplaceable natural resources."

i. "The purpose of this ordinance is to ensure that Agricultural, Open Space and Rural lands are not prematurely or unnecessarily converted to other more intensive development uses."

j. "With limited exceptions, this ordinance allows the Board of Supervisors to re-designate Agricultural, Open Space and Rural lands only if certain findings can be made."

The proposed General Plan update includes amendments to four groups of policies and figures that apply to the Agricultural, Open Space and/or Rural land use designations, which are summarized as follows:

Parcel Size Exceptions For Farmworker Housing Complexes (Policy 3.1.2-6)

Farmworker housing complexes (farmworker camps and multi-family farmworker housing projects) are allowed "by right" in the AE (Agricultural Exclusive) and OS (Open Space) zones, subject to discretionary site plan review. The minimum parcel size for new subdivisions of Agriculturally designated/AE zoned land is 40 acres and Open Space designated/OS zoned land is 10 acres. The Farmworker Housing Study concluded that the ideal size for a farmworker housing complex is between 2 and 20 acres, and further identified over 200 such parcels that would meet specific development and location criteria. Most of these parcels are located within or adjacent to city Spheres of Influence (ultimate city limits as determined by LAFCO) and are zoned AE. However, not all city

Spheres had a sufficient number of existing, appropriately sized parcels. Therefore, the *Farmworker Housing Study* recommended that the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance be amended to allow for the creation of sub-standard sized parcels within or adjacent to a city Sphere or adjacent to unincorporated land designated Urban or Existing Community under the County General Plan.

Farmland Resources are a resource identified in the General Plan as needing protection and preservation (section 1.6 of the *Goals, Policies and Programs*). The Farmland Resource goals are:

1. Preserve and protect irrigated agricultural lands as a nonrenewable resource to assure the continued availability of such lands for the production of food, fiber and ornamentals.
2. Encourage the continuation and development of facilities and programs that enhance the marketing of County grown agricultural products.

Because farmworkers are an essential component of the agricultural industry in Ventura County and farmworkers require special assistance in acquiring decent, safe and affordable housing, the proposed amendment is consistent with the Findings and Purpose of the ordinance, which is to protect agricultural land and the agricultural industry that supports it. Therefore, a vote of the electorate isn't required for this amendment.

Building Coverage Exceptions For Crop and Orchard Related Uses and Farmworker Housing Complexes (Policy 3.1.2-5, Figure 3.4)

The maximum building coverage on parcels designated Agricultural and Open Space is five percent, with a sliding scale up to 50 percent coverage for parcels that are smaller than 10 acres in area. The purpose of this building coverage standard is to maintain the open, undeveloped nature of Agricultural and Open Space designated land and to limit the permanent loss of agricultural soils. Although greenhouses, hot houses and agricultural shade/mist structures are regarded as temporary structures and are exempt from these standards, the building coverage limitations significantly restrict the ability to expand existing, or to construct new crop and orchard related facilities (e.g., packing, storage & preliminary processing; wineries, accessory structures, agricultural sales, agricultural promotional uses). The Agricultural Commissioner's Office recommended that an exception be provided for other crop and orchard related facilities. The *Farmworker Housing Study* recommended that an exception to the building coverage standards be made for farmworker housing complexes.

Because crop and orchard related uses and farmworkers are an essential or important component of the agricultural industry in Ventura County and farmworkers require special assistance in acquiring decent, safe and affordable housing, the proposed amendment is consistent with the Findings and Purpose of the ordinance, which is to protect agricultural land and the agricultural industry that supports it (see preceding section). Therefore, a vote of the electorate isn't required for this amendment.

Increasing the minimum parcel size of the Open Space designation from 10 acres to 20 acres (Policies 3.2.2-5(6) and 3.2.2-5(7); and Figures 3.2a, 3.2b and 3.4)

The Board of Supervisors has directed that the General Plan update consider increasing the minimum parcel size of the Open Space designation from 10 acres to 20 acres. The stated purpose of this change is to prevent Open Space designated areas from being rezoned and subdivided to parcels less than 20 acres, thereby reducing the housing construction potential in Open Space areas of the county and protecting resources in support of the goals of the SOAR ordinance. Therefore, a vote of the electorate isn't required for this amendment.

Community Sewage Treatment Facilities in Non-Urban Areas (Policy 3.1.2-11)

The Board of Supervisors, in anticipation of the potential need to establish and expand community sewer systems in areas with poor groundwater quality, has directed that policy 3.1.2-11 be considered for amendment to allow an exemption to the *Guidelines for Orderly Development* on a case-by-case basis in order to protect or improve groundwater quality.

Water Resources, including groundwater quality, is a resource identified in the General Plan as needing protection (section 1.3 of the *Goals, Policies and Programs*). Because groundwater is an essential component of the agricultural industry in Ventura County and the quality of the water is very important as to the range of crops that can be grown, the proposed amendment is consistent with the Findings and Purpose of the ordinance, which is to protect agricultural land and the agricultural industry that supports it in the Agricultural, Open Space and Rural land use designations. In addition, one of the purposes of Open Space is to protect public health and safety, including areas required for the protection of water quality. Therefore, a vote of the electorate isn't required for this amendment.

Environmental Goals and Policies

Per the *County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines*, General Plan environmental goals and policies mean County General Plan (including Area Plan) goals and policies that serve to protect the environment (e.g., preservation or conservation of resources, avoidance of hazards, preservation of existing land use, or preservation of adequate public facility service levels). As such, not all goals and policies serve to protect the environment and are not considered under CEQA review. Chapter 4 discusses each of the environmental topics contained within the County General Plan and assesses the project's consistency with the respective environmental goals and policies. Most of the environmental policies of the General Plan function as mitigation measures to the potentially significant impact from future development.

Based on the analysis that was done for each of the environmental issues, the proposed focused General Plan update, as amended by the proposed mitigation measures, is consistent with the environmental goals and policies of the County General Plan.

Non-Environmental Policies and Goals

The Planning Division staff reviewed the proposed General Plan update for consistency with other General Plan goals and policies. One proposed amendment was found to create a potential inconsistency.

The Board of Supervisors directed that this focused General Plan Update "consider" an amendment to the countywide *Goals, Policies and Programs* that would increase the minimum parcel size requirements of the Open Space land use designation from 10-acres to 20-acres. Although the specific amendments to the *Goals, Policies and Programs* are relatively simple to accomplish (amend two policies and one figure), inconsistencies would be created between the *Goals, Policies and Programs* and the Coastal Area Plan, Lake Sherwood/Hidden Valley Area Plan, North Ventura Avenue Area Plan, Oak Park Area Plan, Ojai Area Plan, and Thousand Oaks Area Plan. Although the more restrictive policies of the countywide *Goals, Policies and Programs* take precedence over the Area Plans and the proposed focused General Plan Update includes a proposed program (3.2.3) to subsequently amend these Area Plans, there would be an internal inconsistency during this intervening period of time.

In addition, policy 3.1.2-9 of the *Goals, Policies and Programs* states that:

> "Zone Changes, if necessary, shall be processed concurrently with General Plan Amendments to assure zoning consistency."

If the *Goals, Policies and Programs* are amended to require a 20 acre minimum parcel size for Open Space designated lands, then those Open Space designated parcels that are currently zoned OS-10 ac would have to be rezoned. Since there are approximately 1,470 parcels currently zoned OS-10 ac, a similar number of legal notices for a zone change would have to be prepared and mailed to each of the property owners. Although the proposed focused General Plan Update includes a proposed program (3.2.3) to subsequently rezone these parcels, adoption of a 20 acre minimum standard at this time would be inconsistent with policy 3.1.2-9.

To avoid these inconsistencies, this component of the focused General Plan Update could be delayed and processed as a separate General Plan Amendment. This would take approximately three to four

months to accomplish and is within the staffing and budgetary constraints of the County Planning Division.

Another option, although different in scope than that directed by the Board, is to provide an exception to the 20 acre minimum standard for Open Space designated parcels within the boundaries of an Area Plan. Of the 1,470 OS-10ac parcels noted previously, 91 parcels are located within the boundaries of an existing Area Plan. Most of these parcels are located within the Ojai Valley Area Plan, North Ventura Avenue Area Plan or Lake Sherwood Area Plan. This option would avoid creating an internal inconsistency between the General Plan *Goals, Policies and Programs* and the Area Plans.

6.2 Coastal and Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinances and Subdivision Ordinance

Locally adopted ordinances regulating land uses and subdivision of land must be consistent with the local general plan.

As discussed in section ~~3~~2-Project Description, the appropriate sections of the Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance are being amended concurrent with this General Plan amendment. Specifically, the zoning for the Lewis Road Existing Community is being changed from "OS-160 ac" to "RPD", one parcel adjacent to CSUCI is being rezoned from OS-160ac to AE, and Section 8106-2 is being amended to allow creation of substandard sized parcels for Farmworker Housing Complexes within or adjacent to a city Sphere of Influence or adjacent to an unincorporated area designated "Urban" or "Existing Community" on the General Land Use Map.

With these amendments, the proposed project is consistent with the Coastal and Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinances and Subdivision Ordinance.

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